RICARDO

THE

OUTLAW.

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THE OUTLAW:

A Romance.



IN TWO VOLUMES.



Noble thou art,
For noble was thy Sire. *Douglas.*



BY CAPTAIN JOHN SIMPSON,

Of the Royal Marines.



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CHAP. XVI.

During the journey, which took up near four days, the Baron never uttered a syllable to Angela; every evening on their arrival at the place, where they intended to remain for the night, she retired to her apartment, accompanied by her faithful Janet, and saw no more of her father until ready to depart the next morning.

When they entered Lorraine, Angela perceived they were not proceeding towards

the Baron's residence at Metz; she dared not ask whither they were going, but was lost in conjecture; she had derived one consolation from her distress, which was, that she should soon be clasped to the maternal bosom of the Baroness Fitzormond; this dear hope she had cherished, with anxious solicitude, all the journey; but it speedily vanished, when she found they quitted the great road, and struck into the midst of a forest; after travelling some way, they at length reached a small house, surrounded by a cluster of trees, and so completely hid from the view, that it was not discernable until close to it; on the door being opened, a venerable old woman came out, accompanied by a man of no prepossessing appearance; she was conducted into a neat parlour, Janet, with trembling step, followed, and Fitzormond remained at the door in earnest conversation with the man; in a short time he entered the room; and then addressing him-

self to Angela, desired her to prepare to become the wife of Steinbergh in a week; this cruel mandate almost deprived her of utterance, she, for a moment, appeared transfixed to the spot, but at length in an agony of grief, with clasped hands, and streaming eyes, fell at the feet of her father, and entreated him to alter his resolution; let me beseech you, my Lord, she said, rather to strike a poniard in my breast, and end my miseries at once, than thus to doom me to perpetual wretchedness, by forcing me to make false vows to one I hate; let not your daughter have the dreadful sin of perjury to answer for; oh! do not thus draw down the vengeance of Heaven upon her head; Angela thought she now saw some symptoms of relenting in the countenance of the Baron, she therefore resumed her entreaties, with, if possible, more energy; let me conjure you, she continued, by all the affection, that you once bore me; by all that endearing fond-

ness which you shew me in my infancy; by the love which you professed for the partner of your bosom, my dearest mother; by the revered name of father, not to persist in forcing me to the altar, with one, who is an object of dread, and horror to me; who suborned a villain, to tear me from the hospitable roof that gave me shelter, when a wanderer, and an out-cast from my native home; and very near rendered you childless, by bringing me to an untimely grave; one, who, like a midnight assassin, came by stealth into my chamber, and but for the interposing hand of Providence, I had now been in his power; is this the man, my Lord, you have sought out as a husband for your daughter? is this the man for whom you would wish her to abuse the most sacred rites, and in the presence of an offended Deity swear love, and obedience, where she can only feel detestation? oh! let me again implore you not to subject your once loved child to such a trial.

During this speech, various contending emotions agitated the breast of the Baron, and at one time the working of parental affection appeared to be triumphant; but when he considered his dilapidated estates, and that a part of the immense fortune of Steinbergh was to be devoted, on the union taking place, to repair, and free them from every encumbrance; the ebullitions of nature were succeeded by those of anger, and after exclaiming, "peace, disobedient girl, my resolution is fixed, and unalterable; comply with my commands, or dread my vengeance!" he rushed from the room, in a poroxism of rage.

Angela still kneeling at the feet of the Baron, endeavoured to detain him, by holding a part of his dress, but the force, with which he tore himself from her, was too much for her feeble grasp, and with the violence of the exertion, she fell to the ground; Janet, who stood trembling at the scene she

had just witnessed, ran to the assistance of her mistress, but what were her emotions on raising Angela to find her face covered with blood; she was so much stunned by the fall, that it rendered her insensible, her faithful attendant called out most violently, and the woman of the house immediately entered; every restorative was applied, and both were much alarmed lest she should have broken a blood vessel; but they had it not in their power to communicate their apprehensions to each other, one could only speak english, and a little broken german; and the other knew no language but french; they conversed therefore by signs; the woman ran for some water, and Janet washed the blood away, when to her great joy she found it only proceeded from the nose; occasioned by the severe concussion it received from striking against the floor.

Soon as Angela was a little recovered,

feeling quite exhausted with the mental conflict she had undergone, she requested to be conducted to her chamber; it was a small room, neatly furnished; on wishing that Janet might sleep in the same room, the woman ordered a couch to be brought in for that purpose.

Angela was carefully watched by her faithful attendant, and after being several hours restless and disturbed, she at last fell into a sound sleep.

The house in which she was, belonged to her father; it was purchased by him lately, for the convenience of hunting, and here he sometimes passed two or three days in a week; it was fitted up in a commodious style, as the Baroness in summer used occasionally to reside there; the Baron thought by bringing his daughter hither, he should only have her entreaties to encounter; but

had he taken her home, those of the mother would have been to contend with, also.

Angela slept until a late hour in the morning, and when she awoke, found Janet by her bedside, with some refreshment ready for her; she was quite recovered from her bodily sufferings, but the anguish of her mind was not at all diminished, as the cause still existed, the effect could not cease; by the earnest persuasion of Janet, she rose after breakfast, and went down into the parlour, every moment expecting to hear from, or see the Baron; she at first feared the house was Steinbergh's, the assurance however that it was not, gave some little relief to her mind, as she felt more protected under any roof, than his: that it belonged to her father, and that the Baroness sometimes visited it, was pleasing intelligence to her; she derived a satisfaction, from being, where her venerable mother had so lately resided;

in this room, she said, has my excellent parent, lamented my supposed death; here she has shed many a tear to my memory; perhaps, even yet, she believes me to be no more; happy should I be, were I permitted to undeceive her, to fall at her feet, obtain her maternal blessing, and be again folded in her affectionate embrace; her entreaties, I am assured, would be joined with mine, to prevent my being sacrificed to a villain; the prayers of a kneeling wife, and daughter could not pass unregarded; but alas! I shall not be allowed to see her: she doubtless thinks, the sorrows of her child, are long since at an end, in the peaceful grave; ah! would to Heaven they were; but I fear, for much misery am I yet reserved; I will not however repine: that Power, who has preserved my life, and supported me through every danger, will still extend to me, his protecting arm.

Angela, accompanied by Janet, now

strolled round the environs of the house; the air was mild, and serene; she felt refreshed by it; although no impediment was thrown in the way of her walking, she observed the man, with whom she had seen her father in close conversation, constantly following her, but at a respectful distance; she therefore had little doubt he had received orders to that effect; she repeated her walks daily, but her vigilant guardian took care at those times, never to lose sight of her.

A week passed away without molestation, when one morning the woman of the house entered the room while she was at breakfast, and said her son had got directions to conduct Angela to the Baron immediately, who was waiting for her, at no great distance; she dreaded his commands, but yet determined to obey them; she desired Janet to go with her, and after stopping a few minutes to adjust her dress, told the man she was ready to attend him; he led the way,

and she followed, leaning on the arm of her faithful attendant; they walked through some part of the wood, and at last she saw a village, about the distance of half a mile, to which her guide appeared to be conducting her; arriving at it, he proceeded to the church; but what were the sensations of Angela on entering, to see her father and Steinbergh, with a priest ready to perform the marriage ceremony! surprise, horror, and indignation had so engrossed every faculty, that before she could make any remonstrance Fitzormond had forced her to the altar, and the service was begun; the dreadful thought that a few moments more would consign her for ever, to the man she hated, armed her with resolution, and in a loud voice she called to the priest, "stop, I conjure you, do not thus prostitute this rite; I declare, in the presence of that God, whose minister you are, no power on earth shall unite me to Baron Steinbergh!" the priest looked at her

with astonishment, and replied, why is this holy ceremony interupted? beware, rash girl, how you make a mockery of the Church; it is not I, said Angela, that makes a mockery of it, but these who brought me hither, to both of whom, my fixed, unalterable resolution was known, before I came; I am the victim of deception; why was I not made acquainted with this resolution, answered the priest, previous to the commencement of the service? because it commenced at the time, when every faculty was benumbed with consternation, and affright, at the treachery practised upon me, was the reply of Angela; Fitzormond, and Steinbergh were bursting with rage, and called to the priest, go on I command you; do it at your peril, exclaimed Angela, there is an avenging God, at whose altar you now stand, and a dreadful day of retribution will come; go on, go on, vociferated both Barons; you dare not do it, said Angela, by your hopes of salvation I con-

jure you to desist; would you encourage the sin of perjury, by forcing me to make vows, with which my nature never can comply? to swear love, and obedience, where I feel hatred, and detestation? peace, disobedient girl, cried Fitzormond, call not down a father's curses on your head; the priest closed the book and declared, that under such circumstances the ceremony could not proceed; Angela would now have retired from the altar, but was detained by Steinbergh, who said, you shall not go, part of the service is performed, and here I openly claim you as my wife; she shrunk from his touch, and replied, rather shall this hand put a period to an existence, which you have rendered wretched; you have broken the sacred ties of father and daughter; you have robbed me of the affection of a parent; and been my bitterest prosecutor; can you, after this, suppose my fate to yours ever can be united? then deliberately kneeling at the

altar, with her eyes piously lifted up to Heaven, she made a solemn vow, that no power, or circumstance should compel her to become his wife; both Fitzormond, and Steinbergh were astonished at the intrepidity of Angela, they each however endeavoured to detain her, and by threats and promises, oblige the priest to finish the service, but nothing could prevail with him; he said it was against the laws of God, the laws of nature, that compulsion should be used in a ceremony so sacred; without the full, and free consent of both parties, it could not be compleated; by so prostituting his holy office, he should risk not only his temporal, but his spiritual welfare; he dared not be guilty of so flagrant a breach of all laws both human, and divine; then to prevent further entreaty left the church.

The Barons were each burning with rage, and disappointment, to find all their

schemes frustrated by the invincible obstinacy of a girl, and the inflexible resolution of a priest, whom neither promises, or gold could tempt from the duty he owed to God, and himself.

Fitzormond called out, in a voice of thunder, to Angela, "quit my presence this instant, thou destroyer of my peace, and beware of the vengeance of an enraged father;" he then desired the man who came with her, to conduct her back to the house in the wood.

Angela, pale and agitated, immediately left the church, supported by Janet, without uttering one word, and Fitzormond and Steinbergh remained together to brood over their disappointment, they were both much dissatisfied with the result; the one expected this day would have enabled him to have relieved his estates from every incumbrance;

and the other that the young and beauteous Angela would have been consigned to his arms for ever; they yet consoled themselves with the hope, they should find some more accomodating, and less scrupulous priest.

Fitzormond now determined to send the Baroness to Angela, and try what her powers of persuasion could do, he well knew her influence was greater than his, and that her gentle, conciliating manners were better suited to the disposition of his daughter, than his violent, and impetuous temper; although the hope was but a forlorn one, yet he resolved to try it; if it failed he intended to punish her, by confining her, for life, in a nunnery, and compelling her to take the veil; he knew this alternative would have great weight in the breast of her mother, for although her objections were strong against forcing Angela to give her hand, where she could not bestow her heart, yet he thought she would

prefer that, to having her daughter torn from her, and secluded for ever, in the gloom of a convent.

Fitzormond took leave of his companion, and hastened to the Baroness; he had sometime since acquainted her of Angela being still alive, and again at Warburgh Castle, but she was totally ignorant of his journey thither, and of the removal of her daughter; he therefore now informed her where he had been, and that he had brought Angela to his hunting box; and is she indeed there? cried the Baroness; shall I again clasp my child in these aged arms, before I die? oh! let me hasten to her; stop, said the Baron, there is only one condition on which you must see her, that you promise to use your influence, to make her comply with my commands, and become the wife of Steinbergh; never, never, answered the Baroness, will I do it; never will I be accessary to such a

sacrifice; then said the Baron, you shall not again behold her; to morrow she shall be removed to a convent, and there secluded for ever from the world, she shall repent her disobedience at leisure; oh, my Lord, said the anxious mother of Angela, you cannot, will not be so cruel; nature, surely, is not so extinct in you; can you thus banish from you, her, on whom you once doated? she, who will be the prop, the support of your declining years; can you so deeply wound this maternal breast, and bring the wife of your bosom, to a premature grave? alas, my Lord, you know not half the evils, this rash step will occasion you; at the hour of death, how will the reflection of having broken the peace of mind of an only child, and an affectionate wife, wring your heart with bitterest anguish! and before the tribunal of an offended Deity, how will these crimes call for vengeance on your head! peace, said Fitzormond, much agitated, obey

my commands, or you never see her more; the happiness of the father, or daughter must be sacrificed, and which has the superior claim upon you? Heaven forbid! cried the Baroness, that the happiness of either should be sacrificed; one must, replied the Baron, there is no alternative; her marriage with Steinbergh can alone relieve my encumbrances; repair my dilapidated estates, and the house of Fitzormond to its original splendor; never let it be raised my Lord, by the sacrifice of a daughter, let her not be the victim of ambition; for whom do you wish for its restoration? it cannot be for us, whose continuance here must inevitably be short; it can only be for our beloved child, and how can she enjoy such splendor with a broken heart? for what alas, are riches, when compared to happiness!

What, said the Baron, shall the proud house of Fitzormond sink into insignificance?

shall what was the pride, and glory of my ancestors moulder into decay? shall their future descendants succeed only to a barren title, an encumbered estate, and behold what was once a stately mansion, become a dilapidated ruin? shall a noble family be thus dishonored, to gratify the caprice of a disobedient girl? what is her happiness when put in competition with the pride of birth, the dignity of ancestry? by her union with Steinbergh all these difficulties will vanish, as he has promised to enable me to free my estates from encumbrance; and I shall then see these ruins rising, like another Phœnix, from their ashes, and shining with renovated grandeur; his second son is to succeed to the Barony of Fitzormond; thus will the title not become extinct, but be continued in the descendants of my daughter: I cannot promise, answered the Baroness, to entreat my child to become miserable, but should she shew any inclination to comply,

I will not oppose it; go then, this instant, explained the Baron, and if you wish not to plant a dagger in the breast of a husband, bring me word she submits to my desire; if she reject my offer, I swear, the residue of her life, shall be devoted to a convent; with this, Fitzormond left the room.

The Baroness, though anxious once more to behold Angela, went to her reluctantly, on such an errand; she felt assured she should ill execute it; for however she might think it necessary to feed the pride of ancestry, by keeping up the family estate, yet she conceived it was too dearly purchased, by the sacrifice of a daughter; she was determined however, to go, not only in obedience to the commands of the Baron, but impelled by strong inclination again to behold her long lost Angela; twelve months had now compleated their slow course, since that felicity was her's; many an anxious

thought, many a severe pang had lacerated her maternal bosom, at being deprived of the support of her declining years, and many a petition had she offered up to the throne of Heaven for her return; her prayers was heard, her child had been restored, but, alas! restored, only to be torn from her parental arms again, and doomed to a life of misery; for whether the wife of Steinbergh, or sequestered in a nunnery, felicity must be equally a stranger to her; as a mother she could not reconcile herself to either alternative.

CHAP. XVII.



As the Baroness was apprehensive of taking her daughter by surprise, she dispatched a Servant with a note, to give her information of the intended visit.

Angela was walking near the house, with her faithful Janet, when she saw the messenger approaching; she trembled at the sight of him, dreading some fresh mark of her implacable father's resentment, the man put a letter into her hand, the direction of which she plainly saw was her mother's

writing, her anxiety, on that head, was soon at rest; she now trembled, not with apprehension, but with joy; her heart beat high with expectation, she pressed the paper with reverence to her lips, and then eagerly perused its contents; with what transport did she gaze on every line, that announced to her a blessing beyond her hopes; which realized her fondest wishes, by the sweet assurance that she should soon be locked in the affectionate embrace of her venerable mother! the excess of joy felt, at this unlooked for blessing, had not subsided, when the Baroness Fitzormond arrived; soon as she entered the parlour, Angela attemped to kneel, and ask a blessing from her revered parent; no my beloved child, said the Baroness, clasping her in her arms, before her knees could reach the ground, that posture belongs to the Deity alone; let not the homage due to the Creator, be bestowed on the creature, then pressed her to her heart, with all the

anxious solicitude of a doating parent; they remained thus for some moments, the mother's tears blended with the daughter's; their joy at meeting was unutterable, they clung to each other in silent rapture; at length, in broken accents, they exclaimed, "my dearest mother!" "my beloved daughter!"

Angela, on beholding the venerable countenance of the Baroness, saw, with great regret, that she was much altered; although it was lighted up with joy at once again recovering her lost child; yet it was only a momentary flash, which bu till concealed the anxiety, and care too evidently lurking beneath it; the unkindness of a husband; the supposed death of an only daughter preyed much upon a constitution, naturally not strong, and caused her to become only the shadow of her former self.

Alas! madam, Angela said, your too anxious care for me has evidently injured that health, I would lay down my life to preserve; that hollow eye, that pallid cheek, that faded form, shew the mental struggles you have undergone; I have indeed suffered much the Baroness replied, and perhaps not been so resigned as I ought to the decrees of an all-wise Providence; for no tongue can tell the poignancy of my feelings, when I found my child, the delight of my life, the staff of my age, was swallowed up by a devouring element: the distracting thoughts that I should never see you more, and that you had met with your death through the artifices of a villain to get you into his power, harrowed up my soul with the bitterest anguish; my nights were sleepless, and my days were wretched; sometimes I thought reason would forsake her seat, I almost wished for madness, that I might be no longer sensible of my sufferings; but a merciful God has now

relieved them, by restoring you to my aged arms, even from the grave; prostrate before the throne of Heaven, have I returned my thanks, for this great, this unexpected blessing; and offered up my humble suplications for pardon, and forgiveness, that I have dared for a moment, to repine: I participate, my dearest madam, in all your feelings, was the reply of Angela, and I never can be sufficiently thankful for such a miraculous preservation of my life, and for having given me back to your maternal arms, at such a moment, when your precarious health demands the tender care, and solicitude of a daughter; every instant of my future life shall be devoted to the restoration of the best of mothers; now the cause has ceased, I trust the effect will also; the wound made by maternal love, the balm of filial love shall heal; the expressive countenance of Angela, during this speech, beamed with affection, emanating warm from the heart; her fine eyes spoke

more powerfully her feelings, than any language can describe, as she turned them upon the Baroness with ineffable sweetness; the soft effusions of nature bedewed the aged cheek of her mother, she exclaimed, admirable girl! you repay me for all I have suffered; thank Heaven, Angela answered, I have not lost the affection of both parents, for your regard I still possess, and it shall be my study to deserve it; I will watch you with the tenderest anxiety, and hail, with transport, every symptom of renovated health; never, never more, my dearest madam, will we part: oh! that your father would permit it to be so! answered the Baroness, this moment then would end my cares; but he still is determined, if possible, to effect your union with Steinbergh, and has sent me to urge his commands; on that condition alone I am permitted once more to behold my child; I could not promise to persuade, all I dared say was, that I would not oppose it; your

father's will has for ever been a law to me, but in this instance the happiness of a daughter rises paramount to every other consideration.

Ah sure, my mother cannot advise such a sacrifice! said Angela; no, Heaven avert it, exclaimed the Baroness, I had rather you should have found a grave in the bosom of the ocean, then your miseries would have been at an end; I have already sworn at the sacred altar of my God, Angela resumed, never to be his, sworn it in the presence of my father; it was not a start of momentary passion, but an oath calmly, and deliberately taken; so solemn an appeal to the Deity, sure my father cannot require me to break; he will not, dare not ask me to draw down the curse of Heaven upon me, by not keeping a vow so awfully, and at such a moment made: Alas! the Baroness answered, he thinks the commands of a parent should su-

persede every other consideration; nothing therefore can appease, or reconcile him, but the sacrifice required of you, a sacrifice, with such a vow recorded above, you should not make for worlds; his fixed resolution is, that in case of non-compliance, a convent shall be your residence for life; but although it would rend my heart with anguish to have you for ever secluded from me, yet that would be happiness compared to seeing you the wife of Steinbergh; Angela replied, to her venerable parent, if it be the desire of my father, I will assuredly go thither, but no power on earth shall compel me to take the veil; it is not required by an omnipotent Creator, that religion "whose paths are pleasantness, and ways are peace" should doom her votaries to monastic seclusion; the devout aspiration of the pious worshipper, will ascend to Heaven from the chamber of the contrite, as well as from the conventual cell; it never was intended we should live for our-

selves alone, neither the laws of God, or man require it; we have duties to perform in the world, which forbid our forsaking it; society has a claim upon us, to fulfil the endearing ties of daughter, wife, and mother; the divine pattern set before us, by our blessed Saviour, when on earth, was not to abjure the world; he preached not seclusion, but that we should go about doing good; his whole conduct accorded not with monastic retreat, nor has he left one precept behind that ordained it.

The spirit of true religion, firmly rooted in the mind, which this speech of Angela disclosed, delighted the affectionate bosom of her mother, and she rapturously exclaimed, excellent girl! on every word you utter hangs prophetic truth; well may I be proud of such a daughter: the Baroness would not discover the Barons reasons to Angela, for so strongly insisting on her marriage with

Steinbergh, fearing that what she would not grant to the unjustifiable anger of a father, she might be induced to comply with, to prevent his humiliation, by the lustre of the house of Fitzormond being dimmed, when to make it blaze bright as ever was in her power, although it must be at the expence of happiness, peace, and every thing that was dear to her.

The Baron knew not her heart so well as her mother; he conceived his commands alone ought to be sufficient, without condescending to state his reasons were of so humiliating a nature, that it was long before his pride could stoop to communicate them even to the Baroness; nor would he have done it at all, but from the firm persuasion that to see the family mansion rise from its ruins, and be transmitted to his posterity in its pristine splendour, would be equally an object with the Baroness as himself; but am-

bition, and family pride were in her breast only a secondary consideration, the happiness of a much loved child was the first.

Angela now informed her mother, the manner of her wonderful preservation, and introduced her faithful Janet, whose parents, under a beneficent Providence, were the humble instruments of it; she was received, by the Baroness, with a smile of benignity, who expressed her gratitude in the strongest terms, and accompanied it with some solid proofs, by putting into the hands of Janet, a purse well stored with gold; this she positively refused, until commanded by Angela; receive it, said the Baroness, as a grateful mother's tribute, for the saving of her child, and as an earnest of my future friendship, and protection; under the sanction of her mistress, she then took the purse and covered with blushes, after many awkward courtesies, left the room.

On reaching her apartment, she spread the contents on the table before her; never had she even seen such a treasure, much more been possessed of it; she could scarcely believe it real; a thousand times she pressed the purse to her lips, a thousand times she counted over what it contained; after gratitude to her benefactress, and invoking blessings on the head of her, and her excellent daughter, filial affection was the next sentiment predominant in her breast —she wished most heartily she could make her aged parents, Sandy and Moggy, sharers of it; to send any of it to them was not practicable, therefore she determined to reserve a portion of it, until she should see them again; a latent spark of pride was awakened in her when she remembered the number of fine clothes it would purchase, and that on her return home, she should be the envy of all her former acquaintance; a pleasure than which she knew none beyond

her russet mantle, which used to be prized as her Sunday dress, was now looked upon with contempt, as were her yarn stockings and clumsey leather shoes, which she only knew the luxury of, when she went to Kirkwall church, on the sabbath day; the residue of the week, her legs and feet were naked as nature formed them; she reflected on the alteration in her condition, with no small degree of satisfaction, when she saw the humble fisherman's daughter transformed into the sole attendant on the heiress of the noble house of Fitzormond.

Janet was possessed of an excellent natural understanding, but almost totally uncultivated by education; the little she had gleaned, was from an old woman, who kept a small school at Kirkwall, whose knowledge did not extend to reading a chapter in the Bible properly; by the kind assistance of Angela she had made great progress in stor-

ing her mind with what learning the time would admit; she could now read english tolerably well, and could make herself a little understood in french and german; the lowly cot, the pallet bed, were remembered with disgust, yet the former was still dear to her when she recollected it sheltered her venerable parents; she rejoiced in the good fortune that had befallen to her lot, and blessed the day her beloved mistress was washed on shore, on the Orkney Islands.

It was so long since the Baroness had seen Angela, that she determined on remaining with her at least that night; she wished most ardently to take her back to her paternal roof, but she well knew the irascible temper of the Baron would not permit it; both mother and daughter, agreed that, at all events the union with Steinbergh, should be firmly rejected; and if Angela was sent to a convent, it would be far pre-

ferable to marrying a man, with whom nothing but misery could be expected; whereas the lenient hand of time, which generally mitigates every sorrow, might extend its influence to her; the present implacability of her father might relax; when he found every hope of the wished for union had vanished, the tide of affection might again flow in his paternal breast, and gradually subdue all resentment in it; by adopting this alternative, there was a dawning hope of future happiness.

The Baroness sometimes trembled, lest priestcraft and superstition should work upon the youthful mind of Angela, and at length extort from her a promise to take the veil; but when she remembered the firmness her daughter had so recently displayed on this subject, and the rooted conviction she appeared to possess, that an abandonment of the world was not enjoined,

by either the example, or precepts of our blessed Saviour, her fears on that head vanished; therefore to gratify her father, she had no objection to her commencing her novitiate; she would have prefered placing her in the convent, only as a boarder, but to this she knew the Baron would not consent, and that however he might repent afterwards, he would certainly endeavour to force her to take the veil, as a punishment for what he termed, her disobedience.

Having thus resolved what steps were to be taken, the Baroness felt a little more at ease; yet she dreaded the rage of the Baron, when he should be convinced every shadow of hope was fled of his darling plan being realized; the mortification his family pride must undergo, would drive him almost to madness; she much regretted, no other plan could be adopted for repairing the family estates, than one which would

render her daughter miserable; she would cheerfully submit to any deprivation to which her rank in life entitled her; she was willing to retire from the world, and adopt the most rigid economy, if that would accomplish it; but this, she was confident the pride of Fitzormond would not allow; he would not stoop even to a temporary retrenchment, but haughty, and overbearing, he would think it a stain upon the honour of his ancestors, to diminish one atom of his dignity, by reducing his establishment; therefore urging it, she well knew was useless.

While the anxious mother was gazing on her beloved daughter with fondness, and admiration, Angela related all that had happened since they parted; she dwelt with delight on the kindness she met with, when at Warburgh, and painted in the strongest colours, every act of friendship, hospitality, and parental tenderness, she had received

from her dearest Ellen, and her excellent husband; "how did her tongue grow wanton int heir praise," her fine expressive countenance, the faithful index of a mind of sensibility, shew in every feature, the gratitude that flowed spontaneously from her breast; she expatiated on the virtues of her friends with an eloquence peculiarly her own, but dear as they were to her, all her gratitude was not exhausted on them; she felt there was some due to the M'Donalds, and also to her humbler friends Sanday and Moggy, who were the preservers of her life.

The enraptured Baroness watched with anxious solicitude the looks of Angela, and fondly thought she held in her the dawn of future excellence, the germ of every ripening virtue; it would have constituted the joy of her declining years to have nurtured those virtues, and by the warmth of maternal love, have made them bloom in full lux-

uriance; but she was denied this first of human blessings, her long lost child, by a husband's stern command, was again to be torn from the hand that reared her; this thought gave a pang unutterable to the breast of both; time flew with rapid wing, and it was past midnight before they retired to rest

While the Baroness was with Angela, the Baron remained a prey to the most torturing anxiety; one minute he thought the entreaties of a mother, always fondly beloved by the daughter, would have the desired effect, that his wishes would be completed, and consequently he beheld in idea the turrets of Fitzormond raising their proud heads from th rurrounding ruins; but the next minute he reflected, the Baroness was not hearty in the cause, and that of course her entreaties would not be very urgent; indeed he could not expect it, as she had only pro-

mised not to throw any obstacle in the way; if Angela was left to herself he well knew he had nothing to expect but a firm denial; thus agitated between hope, and despair, with the latter most predominant, the Baron passed a restless night; sometimes he traversed the chamber with hasty step, and at others, threw himself on the bed, in his clothes, to endeavour to snatch some relief from sleep, but the morning came without having closed his eyes; in the conflict he underwent, he thought not of the anguish in which the compliance with his wishes would involve his only child; he remembered not, that his ambition was planting a dagger in the breast of a dutiful and affectionate daughter; his impatience now became so great, that he determined to endure these conflicting sensations no longer, but to hasten to the Baroness, and know the worst at once.

As soon as Angela and her mother had

risen, the first object they saw, was the Baron riding up the avenue; at the sight, both turned pale, and trembled; his arrival had been some time announced by old Jaquiline, before either could summon courage to go down stairs; the strength of mind of Angela, all her resolution vanished, and she requested the Baroness to inform her father of her unalterable decision; the courage of the Baroness faltered but for one moment, the next she was firm and collected, assumed her usual fortitude, and then descended into the parlour.

Immediately on her entrance the Baron exclaimed, well, madam, what answer am I to receive? the only answer, my Lord, replied the Baroness, that you can reasonably expect; your daughter declines the offer of the alliance, you propose; can you conscientiously desire it to be otherwise, after the vow, so solemnly and deliberately taken in your presence, at the altar, and recorded

above? the Baron then called out, with vehemence, you, madam, have not urged it, you, who know the necessity of her compliance; indeed my Lord I have not, said the anxious mother of Angela, could I urge a daughter to bring destruction on her head, by breaking an oath taken under such circumstances; no not for worlds: vile cant, and priestcraft! is the honour, and dignity of my family to be sacrificed on account of a rash resolution, made by a disobedient girl? yes, rather than endanger the salvation of your child, the Baroness replied with much energy; I will hear no more from you, I will take her refusal from herself alone; bring her this instant to me; the Baroness, in obedience to the commands of her husband, left the room, and went directly to the chamber, of Angela; she communicated to her, the desire of her father to see her immediately, as from her lips only, he would take a denial; oh spare me, spare me this

trial, said Angela, I dare not meet his anger; call to your aid, the Baroness replied, your usual fortitude, and declare with respectful firmness, your unalterable resolution; she requested a few moments delay, and then said, can I hesitate, when I see such a pattern before me? no madam, you shall find your daughter animated by your example; I am now ready to attend you to the Baron's presence; Angela pale and agitated, supported by her venerable mother, was conducted into the room where her father was; the moment she beheld his countenance she saw rage, and disappointment depicted in it most strongly; with eyes flashing fire, he demanded of Angela, whether she would consent to his wishes? no, my Lord, she calmly replied, I cannot, dare not do it, remember the awful vow made at the altar; would you, my father, wish me to brave the vengeance of offended Heaven, by breaking it; it ought never to have been

made; rash, and precipitate vows are not required to be kept: oh, my Lord, you well know it was not rashly, and precipitately, but coolly, and deliberately taken; then prepare to expiate your disobedience in a nunnery, there you shall be confined for life, the angry Baron vociferated, and darting a look of indignation at both mother, and daughter, rushed out of the room, in a paroxism of rage.

CHAP. XVIII.



THE moment the parlour door was closed, Angela ran into her mother's arms, and said thank Heaven the trial is over, even taking the veil is preferable to becoming the wife of Steinbergh; let not your resolution forsake you, the Baroness replied, and that also may be avoided; if Heaven require any such votaries, they must be willing ones; time may appease your father's anger, and he will again glory in his child; but until the storm has expended its violence, you must be sheltered from its efforts in a convent; although

in your novitiate you will have the liberty of frequently seeing me; probably when Fitz-ormond knows you are enclosed within the walls of a nunnery, he will trouble himself no farther on the subject, and possibly not deign to inquire in what situation you are there; I will therefore send a messenger to him saying, that as it is his pleasure you should be placed in a convent, you are ready to comply with his commands; I will offer to accompany you myself, in which case I can enter you only as a boarder; the Baroness, however thought it best to wait until his wrath was a little subsided, consequently delayed the messenger a few hours; this plan was however soon frustrated, the Baron disappointed in what he ardently wished, was determined to revenge his disappointment immediately on the head of his innocent child; soon as he left her, he hurried to the convent of St. Clair, and arranged every thing with the Lady Abbess, for the recep-

tion of Angela, as a novice; and before the letter was dispatched, which the Baroness had written, an order arrived to Jaques, to take her thither directly; the anxious mother was determined to accompany her; on observing tears running down the pallid cheek of Angela, she tenderly embraced her, and said, be not dismayed, a bountiful Providence never sends any misfortune, without something to alleviate it; you might have been ordered to a convent far distant; but that of St. Clair is only two miles from Metz, which will give me daily an opportunity of seeing you, and of healing your sorrows with the balm of maternal love; had it been otherwise, I could not long have survived your loss.

At this moment, Janet burst into the room, in an agony of grief, threw herself at the feet of her mistress, and told her, it was reported she was going to be shut up in a

nunnery for life, because she would not marry that odious Steinbergh; for God's sake my Lady, do not go to such a hideous place; I must, answered Angela, obey the commands of my parent, there is no alternative; she then desired Janet to arise from her knees; if you must go, replied this faithful creature, take me with you, I will become nun, or any thing else, sooner than part with you; what! would you leave your parents for ever? would you break the hearts of both Sandy, and Moggy? No, Heaven forbid! but I am assured my own heart will break, if I must seperate from you; the Baroness, observing the emotions of Angela, at this instance of affection in her humble friend, were too powerful for utterance, said to Janet, your mistress shall not be secluded there for life, and until she return again to the world, you shall find an asylum with me; you shall be only two short miles distant from the convent, and may see her daily; this assurance

a little comforted Janet, and the idea of not being entirely parted from her beloved mistress, relieved her mind of half its burden; she thanked the Baroness, with a grateful, and over-flowing heart, then respectfully courtesying to both, left the room.

Old Jaqueline now came to inform Angela, her son was ready; it was intended by the Baron, she should go behind this man, upon a horse which was provided for the purpose; but the Baroness ordered the carriage that conveyed her thither, to be brought to the door, then with her daughter got into it, and drove to the convent of St. Clair.

On their arrival they were conducted into the refectory, where they found the lady Abbess; she was a tall commanding figure, and appeared to be turned of fifty; her eyes were dark, and expressive; the remains of former beauty were yet visible;

but in her looks there was a sternness, and austerity, occasioned by long seclusion from the world, and the consequent effect of the dignity of the office, which she had for several years held; in her manners it was evident, humility was not her leading characteristic.

She was the younger daughter of one of the most ancient of the noblesse of France, and the pride of rank attached to her from her birth, had not in retirement forsaken her; the haughtiness, and formality of her manner, so totally opposite to the meekness, and mildness inculcated by the precepts of that religion, to which she had devoted her future days, disgusted both the Baroness, and Angela yet more, with a conventual life; when however, she recollected that in Angela she beheld the heiress of the house of Fitzormond as she supposed, come to be admitted an inmate there for ever the natural

severity of her brow was somewhat relaxed, from the hope, that, as she was the only child, the convent of St. Clair would hereafter be endowed with the estates of that noble family; she advanced to the young novice, after making a cold and formal courtsey to the Baroness, took her by the hand, and said, well hast thou chosen daughter, to retire from a world, in which you are surrounded with every temptation to vice, where temporal concerns are alone regarded, and spiritual ones neglected; the noise, and bustle of which is incompatible with the duty we owe to him, who expiated our sins by an ignominious death upon the cross; within these walls, neither contention, ambition, or strife exist, secluded from all that can disturb, or agitate the mind, we devote ourselves to our God, that God, who beholds with mercy, the prostrate suppliant, who sees the motive, with the act, and rejects not the prayer of the humble penitent; what joys

can the world afford equal to giving up ourselves for ever to the service of our Maker; abjuring every other consideration; and by self denial, and penance, subduing all temptations to evil here, and preparing to be fit partakers of that endless bliss, promised to the truly righteous hereafter; observing Angela to blush deeply, she resumed,—I see, my daughter, the subject animates you, the greater the sacrifice you make, by renouncing rank, riches, honours, and whatever may render the world still dear to you, the greater is your merit, to have nobly overcome, at your age, all the allurements which entice too many to continue in it; I am assured, by the glowing crimson on your cheek, that you ardently long for the moment, when you will be permitted to make those vows at the sacred altar, which will unite you to heaven for ever.

The blushes of Angela were not caused

by animation, but by vexation, that she dare not immediately avow her sentiments; ah! she said to herself, little do you know this heart; little do you think that it is formed of too inflexible materials to yield to all your sophistry; and that the time, to which you allude, will never arrive; she could hardly forbear answering the Abbess, and declaring her fixed unalterable resolution not to take the veil; but she knew it would enrage the Baron yet more; therefore although she detested the smallest shadow of deception yet for the sake of a mother's peace, she consented to use it; that suffering parent had already undergone too much from the irascible temper of her father, and should she again resist his commands, she was certain the Baroness would still be a sufferer, and be subject to all the effusions of his wrath, she therefore was silent; the crimson of her cheek, which the Abbess took for the effusions of joy, at the prospect of her future life

being wholly devoted to her Creator; for the emanation of religious enthusiasm in the mind, was the blush of conscious shame, that she was obliged, for a moment, to countenance deception, was occasioned by the pang which pierced the breast of purity, and innocence, at being betrayed even into the shadow of a falsehood; conscience, that self accusing monitor, caused her cheek to glow with crimson of a deeper dye; but when she remembered the deception was the offspring of parental love, she felt in some degree justified, and the peace of that bosom, which was "free from blemish as untrodden snow," became once more restored.

The Abbess being now called out of the room, the Baroness again took the opportunity of cautioning Angela to beware of the arts of priestcraft, and superstition, with which she would be assailed on every side; however they may profess to be serving the

cause of Heaven, she said, be assured they have also a view to the temporal things of this world; the idea of the convent being endowed with the Fitzormond estates, is not the least of their inducement for using every artifice to confirm you in your supposed wish of taking the veil; did they imagine a shadow of doubt remained in you breast, threats, promises, every engine would be set to work that could intimidate, or persuade you to their purpose; had you not a strength of mind, superior to most women of your age, I dare not trust you in such hands; I am confident the firmness you have displayed on every other occasion, will not forsake you on one so important; I therefore can truly say my heart has no fears for you; then tenderly embracing Angela, and promising in a day or two, to see her again, the anxious mother took her leave.

The lady Abbess now returned, and in-

troduced Angela to the sisterhood; there were amongst them, nuns of all ages; some who had devoted many years to the solitude of a cloister, and so long since they had retired from the world, that they were totally estranged from it, and had acquired a preciseness, and formality of manner, the natural effect of being secluded for such a length of time, from all society but that within the walls of their convent; others were plump, blooming virgins, who, notwithstanding their demure looks before the lady Abbess, and and the solemn vow, that, probably they had been compelled to take, yet fixed their thoughts more on the pleasure they had lost by abjuring one world, than on the happiness they were taught to believe, a life of austerity and penance would ensure them in another.

All of them welcomed their future companion most cordially; the elder congratu-

lated her on entering those walls, where alone true happiness, and peace of mind was to be found; the younger part offered their congratulations also, in nearly the same words, but their looks belied their speech, and they rather deemed it to call for consolation, than congratulation; under the rigid, and scrutinizing eye of the Abbess, they were obliged to shew a countenance of apparent content and resignation; but, in her absence, they gave many a sigh to the memory of that world, they had for ever abjured; shed many a tear, that they were doomed, by a parents stern command, to imprisonment for life, in the gloom of a convent, for the aggrandizement of the elder branch of the family; to be offered up as victims to the shrine of ambition.

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Soon as the novitiate habit could be prepared, Angela was invested with it; it was emblematical of the purity of her own

mind; never did she appear so lovely, as when arrayed in this plain, and unornamented manner; not all the produce of the mines of Golconda, could have made her look more attractive; although there was no fear of her becoming a convert to the life of a recluse, yet she felt a peace of mind, to which she had been a stranger, since she quitted Warburgh Castle; she was here no longer subject to the passionate invective of an unnatural father, her mother she knew would frequently see her, also her humble companion Janet; naturally of a religious turn, but averse to superstition, she joined the nuns with fervency and devotion, in their morning and evening orisons, and her voice was lifted up with theirs, in the sacred anthem, accompanied by the deep and solemn tones of the chapel organ.

After having been three days in her new habitation, Angela was informed there was

a person in the refectory waiting to speak with her; on entering it, she found her faithful Janet, bathed in tears; good heaven, what is the matter? exclaimed her mistress: is my mother not well? it was some time before she could procure an answer, nothing but sobs and tears were returned to her repeated enquiries; at length Janet said,—Alas! my dear lady, I never expected to see you enclosed in this gloomy prison, and the cruel Baron says you shall be here for life; the dismal looking nuns, with their black habits, quite terrify me; and the meagre old porteress at the convent gate, frightened me beyond description; what with her wrinkled features, and forbidding countenance, she looks a departed spirit sent from the other world to warn us of our end; death itself can never come in a form more hideous; I cannot yet recover myself; they have not I see put any of their black dresses upon you; if you will be advised by me,

you will not remain here another hour; marrying Baron Steinbergh even, would be better than this;—no Janet, Angela replied, that would be an everlasting misery: this is only a temporary one, be assured, no power on earth shall detain me here, longer than I feel disposed to continue; the Baron cannot force me to become a nun; it is impossible to make me take the veil, without my full, and free consent; therefore compose yourself, we shall yet see many happy days together; I wish to remain here for the present, as I know no other asylum, where I can be so free from persecution: oh! let us return to Warburgh; that would be useless as my father would soon force me from thence; the Count will protect you madam; but too fatal protection it would be, even at the hazard of his life; and shall I sacrifice the husband of my dearest Ellen? No! the detested name of Steinbergh would be comparative happiness to that dreadful thought.

—but we shall see the good Count and Countess again, said Janet; I trust we shall renew those happy scenes, we have beheld there, answered Angela; the convent bell now summoned the nuns to vespers, consequently she was obliged to leave her humble friend, who at parting, assured her mistress she would return again very soon, believe me, my dear lady, she said, I have no happiness when not with you; as I find you will not continue here for life, I shall visit you with less fear; and shall soon become accustomed to the grim visages, and dismal habits of the old nuns that I have seen who glide about this gloomy building like so many horrid spectres.

The days of Angela now passed tolerably tranquil, sometimes she had a visit from the Baroness, at other times from Janet; the Baron continued irascible as ever; she was consequently happy, at being beyond

the reach of his anger; as the lady Abbess concluded it was her decided choice to take the veil, she underwent no persecution on the subject; therefore she had little to agitate or discompose her; knowing she could put an end to her confinement whenever she pleased, it was not irksome, on the contrary, she considered it a comfortable retreat, from the vengeance of an enraged father; —the nuns showed towards her the most friendly disposition, and she was courteous to them all; but she felt a particular attachment to sister Agatha, to whose cell she frequently retired, and enjoyed many pleasant hours in her society; she was a few years only older than Angela, and having felt most keenly, the arrows of misfortune, was disgusted with the world, and voluntarily retired to devote her days to heaven; she had taken the veil about twelve months; there was a congeniality in their disposition, a similarity of sentiment, which endear-

ed them to each other; their ideas were in such perfect unison, that the seeds of friendship soon ripened in their breasts, and every day took stronger root; sister Agatha, altho' a nun, agreed with Angela in her ideas of a conventual life; that when there was any prospect of happiness, by continuing in the world, such a sacrifice was not required by heaven; but when every hope of future peace and felicity, is irrevocably gone; when the heart is wounded with incurable sorrow; when it has tasted of all the bitterness of grief; and drank deep of the cup of affliction; its only and last consolation is to be found in the peaceful serenity of a convent; unfit for the active duties of life, the soul then devotes itself to the calm and tranquil ones of religion, where alone the broken and contrite heart, can find a relief from its sorrows.

Every hour appeared to cement strong-

er, the intimacy of these two friends, until at length they became inseparable; one evening when the weather prevented their walking in the convent garden, as usual, they retired to the cell of sister Agatha; Angela then, for the first time, ventured to express a wish to know the events that had occasioned her companion to abjure the world, and voluntarily doom herself to be a prisoner for life; why such transcendant virtues as would adorn society, should for ever be buried in seclusion; may I ask, said she, by what misfortunes you were induced to take the veil?

Alas! replied sister Agatha, my sorrows are great, they have shaken my frame so severely, that I wonder reason has retained her seat; may you, my young friend, ever be a stranger to such griefs; it is now time for Vespers, but when they are over, if you will return hither, I will relate my sad story.

CHAP. XVIII.



History of Sister Agatha.

I AM descended from a noble family in Picardy; my father was a Baron, my mother the daughter of one; two children were the fruit of their union; I was the first born, five years after brought me a brother; nursed in the lap of plenty, and opulence, beloved by the most affectionate of parents, I had not a wish ungratified; the first twenty years of my life passed away in an almost uninterrupted state of felicity, when my heart became subject to those tender pas-

sions, so strongly interwoven in our nature; I then beheld the youthful, accomplished, Frederick de Ribemont, the sight of him awakened in me, sensations, that had hitherto been dormant; and I soon discovered he was necessary to my happiness; his image was ever before me; a thousand doubts and fears took possession of my mind, lest I should not have made a similar impression upon him; but these doubts and fears were soon dissipated, as, after some few meetings I had the sweet conviction, that I inspired him with a passion, equally ardent as my own; he called one morning to avow it, and requested the Count de Ribemont, his father, whose sanction he had obtained, might be permitted to make proposals to my parents; to this, with some seeming reluctance, I gladly consented; every thing was soon arranged to the satisfaction of all parties, and I had the prospect of becoming the happiest of women.

On account of neither of us being of age, it was thought adviseable to defer our union for a year, during which time my be loved Frederick was to make the tour of Europe; after passing a few weeks in the society of each other, blessed with the affection of the man of my choice, to whom my future life was to be devoted: ah! weeks of felicity too exquisite to last, Frederick left me, to commence his travels; I need not describe the severe pangs of parting, as I am sure, your susceptible breast can well imagine them; my attachment had the sanction of my parents, consequently concealment was no longer necessary, and every feeling of my heart was undisguised; we parted with the firm conviction that a few fleeting months would restore us to each other; alas, how visionary was the hope! how dire the disappointment!

For many weeks after the absence of

Frederick, every post brought me the sweet testimonials of his unchanged affection;—with what delight did I treasure up these precious lines! with what rapture did I gaze upon them! each fond expression was read over a gain and again, until the tear of gratitude, dimmed my sight, a tribute due to his unbounded constancy: these dear memorials of his regard, were my only solace in his absence; I saw the close of every day with joy, as it brought the time nearer at which I was again to behold him.

About nine months had completed their slow course, when I found his letters were less frequent, and I perceived they were not quite so affectionate as before; I attributed this change to want of health, want of spirits, to every thing but want of love;—at length his letters ceased entirely; day after day, week after week, elapsed, and brought no tidings of him; great, beyond expression

was my distress, for imagination painted to me, the dreadful idea, that Frederick was no more.

I passed much of my time with his family, hoping they would soon hear some intelligence of him; but each day was a source of fresh disappointment; I endeavoured to give his excellent mother, that comfort I so much needed myself; but alas, all we could do, was to mingle our tears together; bitter was the reflection, that the heart which throbbed for me alone, had now most probably, ceased to beat; that the hand, which traced each line of pure affection, and matchless tenderness, with which every letter to me abounded, was now mouldering in the dust; the Count, his father, strove to pour consolation alternately into the bosom of each, by the assurance that if his son were actually dead, no doubt but some intelligence of such an event would have arrived;

the death of a stranger of rank, even in a foreign country, could not long be concealed; ah! but my Lord, I exclaimed, he may have fallen a prey to the dagger of an assassin, in some remote spot, where we never may hear of him more; compose yourself, my amiable young friend, the Count replied, and do not thus seek sorrow by anticipation; if this mysterious silence continues much longer, I will myself pursue the route he took in search of him.

A few days after this resolution had been taken, a draft was presented to the Count, for acceptance, by one of the Paris bankers, which was in the hand writing of his son; it was dated from Venice, about a month back; I examined it with accuracy and instantly knew it to be the signature of my Frederick; that he was alive, a short time since, was now certain; such intelligence proved an exhilirating cordial to my

drooping spirits; but yet my wonder and astonishment was increased as to the cause of his long silence; it was not probable that every letter would have miscarried; if one had, if he were too ill to write, some one, surely would have performed the friendly office of acquainting his family with it; we were all lost in conjecture, and looked with anxiety, to each days post, to elucidate the mystery; another month elapsed, and still no tidings; my own patience had long been exhausted, at length so was that of his father, who now determined to follow him immediately.

The morning previous to that on which Count de Ribement had fixed to commence his journey, a note was received by him at breakfast; on reading it, he turned pale immediately rang the bell for the servant, and inquired who was the bearer of the note, and whether he was waiting; the servant answered it was delivered by an elderly gen-

tleman, who called at the door in a carriage, said it required no answer, and drove off again with rapidity; the Countess and myself involuntarily exclaimed, "no ill news I hope from Frederick!" The Count spoke not a word, but threw the note on the table, and left the room in much agitation; we both eagerly took it up, and read as follows: "Take the advice of a stranger, go to Venice instantly, and save your son from ruin, if possible:" soon as I knew the dreadful import of it, I sunk down upon a sofa and fainted; so I believe would the countess also, had not her kind solicitude for me, recalled her fleeting senses; by her assiduous care, I was soon a little revived; she then endeavoured to subdue her own feelings, that she might alleviate mine; she gently chid me for thus giving way to them; she pointed out that whatever the ruin was, which awaited him, it was possibly in a father's power to save him, if he proceeded to Ve-

nice without loss of time; this hope was strengthened by the entrance of the Count, who announced his intention of setting off the moment post horses could be procured; soon as the carriage was ready, he took an affectionate leave of both, hastily departed, and left us in a state, better felt, than described.

We each endeavoured to give the other that consolation, we stood so much in need of ourselves; our tears flowed in unison; and in our morning, and evening orisons, offered a petition to heaven, that the Count might arrive in time to shield a beloved son from the ruin that awaited him; on the nature and extent of which, we dare not hazard a conjecture; melancholy passed our days, and sleepless our nights.

When the Count de Ribement had been gone more than three weeks, our impati

ence was great to hear from him; at the expiration of a month the wished-for letter arrived, which we expected would either confirm or dissipate our fears; it remained sometime on the table before either could summon courage to break the seal, at length the Countess, with trembling hand, unfolded it; the contents were short and not satisfactory; it only contained the information, that the Count had arrived safe at Venice, and not yet been enabled to find his son, but had every reason to suppose he was still there, under an assumed name; this only redoubled our anxiety, we formed many conjectures, but could bring none within the compass of probability; we could not imagine what cause might induce the son, and heir to the Count de Ribement, one of the most ancient houses in France, to give up that name, of which he was once so proud, and conceal himself under a borrowed one; the only idea which took pos-

session of our minds was, that he had committed some act, against the laws of the country he was in, and made use of this subterfuge to escape from justice; yet his conduct had ever been so irreproachable, that we would not suffer such a thought to his prejudice, to be more than momentary; all our powers of thinking were exhausted, and we determined to wait with as much fortitude as possible, until we should again hear from the Count.

Three weeks more completed their slow course, and no intelligence arrived; but at the commencement of the next, late one evening a carriage drove up to the door, and a few moments brought the Count into the room; the Countess and myself instantly exclaimed, "Have you found our dear Frederick? Is he with you?" "He is well," replied the Count, "I left him at Venice;"

this was spoken with much agitation, his countenance betrayed his mind was not at ease; he then threw himself into a chair, and covered his face with his hands; the anxiety of us both was roused, and we joined in earnest entreaty, that he would elucidate the mystery which appeared to hang over his son; his mind seemed to labour with more than his tongue dared to give utterance; "I conjure you," said the distressed mother, "say to what cause I am to attribute this dreadful silence; something of direful import disturbs your peace, and convulses your whole frame; speak my lord, and ease my bursting heart;" on my part I could not give utterance to my feelings, but stood the image of despair; the Count now appeared to forget his own sufferings, on beholding ours; he tenderly took a hand of each, and said, "think no more of him, he is unworthy of your regard," then, in an agony of grief,

turned from us to disguise his emotions; it was some little time before he was collected enough to speak; he then requested us to command our feelings, and listen to what he had to relate; we sat down in breathless expectation, and the Count began as follows:—

When I left you, I lost no time in repairing to Venice, and on making enquiries for Frederick de Ribement, found he had not been seen at his usual place of resort, nor even at the opera, where his love of music induced him to be a constant attendant, for more than a fortnight; by the account of a young nobleman, with whom he was most in the habit of intimacy, I could only learn, that he suddenly disappeared from the Hotel, in which he lodged, and was supposed to have left Venice; I now began to suspect he had fallen a victim to the stiletto of some venetian Bravo; but had it been so

I thought that if the offender was not discovered, the body would; and his clothes and papers, most probably in such a case, be found in his apartments; I therefore hastened to the hotel, and was informed, that one evening after dusk, he packed up his trunks delivered them to two Porters, who put them into a gondola, and followed himself immediately, without saying whither he was going; since which, he had not been seen at the Table d'Hote, or any public place.

This intelligence relieved me from the dread of his being assassinated at Venice, and I felt a strong presentiment on comparing every circumstance, that he had not quitted it, as I could not find a passport had been granted to any person answering to his name, or description; I therefore determined to remain where I was, hoping some unforeseen circumstance might soon give me a clue, by which this mysterious conceal-

ment might be unravelled; you may be well assured every effort was used by me, for that purpose; at length, worn out with anxiety, and a fruitless search, I had nearly come to the resolution of returning home, when walking one evening, after dusk, upon the Rialto, I was met by a tall man evidently disguised; his eye caught mine, immediately he started, turned round, wrapped his cloak closer about him, and walked back the way he came, with the utmost rapidity; I followed, fast as possible, but he was speedily out of sight; the view I had of him was so momentary, and his countenance so hidden, that I could not form the remotest idea whom he might; but, from his manner, I felt confident I was not unknown to him, and that he had a motive for avoiding me; this could only spring from something that related to Frederick; my anxiety consequently redoubled to find out this mysterious stranger; I walked night after night,

in the same place, at the same hour, but he appeared no more; I searched every street, but to no purpose; I saw so little of his countenance, when we met, that I could only recognize him by his figure, and dress, and by the emotions he would then most probably discover on beholding me once more; altho' every effort yet had been unavailing, I was determined to persevere in my search, trusting some fortunate chance might yet bring us together.

As I was taking my usual evening walk upon the Rialto, my notice was attracted by the voice of a female, who was singing in a gondola, that was approaching; the strains were exquisitely fine, she was warbling a most pathetic italian air, with great powers of execution, not a breath of wind was stirring, consequently every note was most distinctly heard; and completely engrossed my attention; when the gondola came yet near-

er, I perceived it was approaching the shore; curiosity induced me to endeavour to get a sight of the fair syren, who had thus enchanted me; on arriving at the place where she was about to land, I concealed myself from observation, under the shade of a portico, and beheld by the reflection of the moon what appeared to be a most beautiful fascinating woman; my attention was so wholly absorbed in looking at her, that I did not at first notice the person by whom she was assisted from the gondola; at length I directed my observations towards him; but how great was my surprise, to find in her companion, an exact resemblance of the mysterious stranger; the impulse of the moment urged me forward to know who he was, but the reflection that he would again fly from me most probably, with his former rapidity, checked my advancing steps; I then determined to follow him at a distance, that

I might know his residence; after the whole party, which consisted of several more, had landed, they walked slowly towards the Piazza of St. Mark, where they separated; the stranger with the lady on his arm, whose musical powers had so delighted me, turned into a street on the left, and I continued to follow them, unobserved, until they came to a small, but neat villa, in the out-skirts of the town, the door was opened by a servant, they entered and it again closed; I was on the point of rushing in with them, and demanding an audience; but when I reflected I was in a country, where the dagger of the assassin is often steeped in the blood of its victim with impunity, under the covert of darkness; and that such an intrusion might possibly cost me my life, I determined to delay my visit, until the next morning; but I remained there some time, to make observations upon the situation of

the house, in order that I might not have any difficulty in finding it again, I then returned to my hotel, with the hope that the ensuing day would bring me some news of my lost Frederick.

I experienced a sleepless night, my mind being agitated by the many conflicting sensations; I thought how visionary was the hope I indulged, and what a slender foundation I had to build upon; the man I saw enter the house, might not be the one I met upon the Rialto, and even if he had, possibly, motives for his conduct, that did not in the least relate to me.

I began to think I was drawing inferences from circumstances in which I was not warned, and that I could form no excuse for intruding myself into the presence of a stranger, on such slight grounds,

therefore it would be better to delay the visit until I could find who resided there, and make some further inquiry.



CHAP. XX.



History of Sister Agatha continued.

SOON as I had breakfasted, I quitted my Hotel, and directed my steps to the villa I had left the preceding evening; I determined in the first place, to discover whose habitation it was, I had too well marked it, not again to recognize it; a very short time brought me thither, and after surveying it, with anxious solicitude, I endeavoured to gain the name of the occupier from some one passing by; at first my efforts were fruitless, none to whom I made appli-

cation would give me a satisfactory answer; at length a servant came from the house; on passing me, I stopped him, and asked, with much impetuosity, who lived there? the eager, and imperative manner in which I made the enquiry, at first startled him, and he hesitated to answer me, but on slipping a couple of ducats into his hand, he was disposed to be more communicative; that house, he said, is occupied by Signor Lorenzo; who is the lady that lives with him? I demanded; she is Signora Lorenzo, his wife, the man replied; she was a singer lately at the Venetian Opera, but after her marriage, her husband did not approve of her continuing on the stage, therefore, at his desire, she relinquished it; the gallantry of her former profession however, still attaches to her; if the poor Signor knew all, he would not be enamoured; I have this moment delivered a billet doux to her from my master, a young venetian no-

bleman, who has made an assignation with her for this evening; how can this be done I replied, without the knowledge of her husband; they say Signor, answered the man, charity covereth a multitude of sins, so it is with her, for she goes out under pretence of visiting a sick friend; after conjuring me to be secret, as his place depended on his silence, which nothing could have broken, but my liberality, he hastily took his leave, and in a few moments was out of sight.

The account I received of the inmates of the villa, convinced me they could not give the information I required; I was therefore walking slowly away, when I saw a man in the varhandha; he stood sometime, as if absorbed in thought, then threw himself on a seat, and took off his hat to enjoy the refreshing breeze; but great indeed was my astonishment, when in this stranger I beheld my lost Frederick; at first,

surprise and consternation rendered me motionless, but I soon recovered myself, and entered the gate of the lawn which was before the house; the noise of opening it alarmed him, seeing me approach he disappeared in an instant; on trying the door of the villa, I found it fastened; I then went to the large window which reached the ground, and opened into the varhanda, this was fast also; at length finding I was determined not to go away without seeing some one, a female servant came to the door, and requesting to know what I wanted; I told her I was in search of my son, Frederick de Ribement, whom I had just seen to enter that house; there has been no such person here, the servant replied; then I must see Signor Lorenzo; neither the Signor or Signora are at home, was the answer, and at the same time an attempt was made to shut the door; such a barefaced denial roused every feeling of resentment, I therefore pushed back the girl

before she could effect it, and entered the house; I turned to the left into the first room that was open; there I beheld the Signora extended on a sofa, with a lute by her side; on the table was an italian song she appeared to have been practising, and several music books were scattered about the floor; it was the form, and figure of the lady I had seen quit the gondola: but the beautiful crimson which then bloomed on her cheek, was gone, she now appeared pale, haggard, and wan; this convinced me she was indebted to art, not nature, for the roseate hue, which gave to her the semblance of beauty at our first meeting; soon as I entered, she arose from her recumbent posture, and haughtily demanded the cause of this intrusion; I answered she knew the cause too well; that I was the father of Frederick de Ribement, come to seek his son; I know not such a person she replied, with unblushing confidence, this house belongs to

Signor Lorenzo, my husband, and I insist upon your quitting it instantly; never, I exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, until I have found the object of my search, whom I saw not ten minutes since, setting in the varhandha; whether awed by the impassioned, and vehement tone in which I uttered the last sentence, or from the wish to divert me from my intention, by the soft blandishments of her sex, which she well knew how to use, when she had any end to gain, her contracted and angry brow on a sudden, relaxed, with a fascinating smile, she requested me to be seated, and she would explain all she knew about my son, Frederick de Ribement; she now pretended to recollect that a person of that name, had been an occasional visitor to Signor Lorenzo, but that he left Venice more than a fortnight since; he departed very abruptly, and she knew not whither he was gone; infamous woman! I replied, cease thus to trifle with

a father's feelings, I know my son to be in this house, and will search every apartment until I find him; I then rose, and ran to the door of a room, which was opposite, and should have entered before she could have impeded my efforts, had it not been fastened on the inside; I demanded it to be opened instantly, when she rushed before me, and threw herself on her knees, exclaiming, Signor, enter not that room I conjure you; my sister lies there at the point of death, and is now receiving the last absolution from her confessor;—convince me it is so, said I, by ordering the door to be opened, I promise you I will not disturb so solemn a rite; I dare not, she answered, under pain of excommunication; tired with the various subterfuges of this syren, I would listen to her no longer; I therefore applied my foot to the door, and with one blow, burst it open; on entering I instantly beheld my poor deluded Frederick; he stood trembling before

me with agitation and alarm; pity, compassion, anger, by turns took possession of me, and kept me silent; before I could sufficiently compose the conflicting sensations of my breast, and give utterance to my thoughts, he was at my feet; he affectionately seized my hand, and bathing it with his tears, cried out in an agony of despair, oh my father, fly me, abjure me, I am no longer worthy of you; I have forfeited all claim to your affection, have disgraced my family, by entering into a fatal connection, which is too firmly rivetted to be dissolved; I desired him to rise, and talk calmly on the subject; seeing the Signora close to me, attentively listening to every word; I ordered her instantly to quit the room, which she reluctantly did, darting at me a look of indignation; alas, my Lord, replied Frederick, you never can forgive me, I have offended you beyond all hope of it; let me know first the extent of your offence, and

why you would not see your injured father? because I have injured him, he said, with much emotion, shame would not let me; with which he sunk upon a chair, and hid his face upon the table; that you are connected with this woman I answered, I clearly perceive; if the connection be only temporary, your fault shall be forgiven, and you shall once more be received into the bosom of your family; a fond mother waits to embrace you, and also one to whom you are bound by honor and affection; I blush to say, my lord, he answered, the connection with Signora Lorenzo, is permanent, I am lawfully married to her; then I exclaimed, you are married to infamy, you have shamefully deserted the most virtuous of women, to unite yourself with the vilest; wring not my heart I conjure you, he replied, with the remembrance of my ingratitude to one, I dare not name; but indeed my lord, you wrong the Signora, for let her faults be what

they may, her fidelity to me cannot be questioned; at this credulity I could bear no more, but called out vehemently, Frederick you are the victim of deception, she is the most abandoned of her sex, for this very evening she has made an assignation, with a young venetian nobleman; watch her and you will be convinced of it; he answered it is impossible, she cannot be thus base; if so, my lord, she must be the worst of hypocrites, as her affection for me has ever appeared so pure, artless, and ingenuous; I then told him, I knew it from the most undoubted authority, having spoken with the servant, by whom she sent the assignation; and that he must either give up this woman as a wife, or me as a father; he begged to await the trial of that evening, when if he found my information correct, he would procure a divorce, and instantly leave her; being confident of the truth of it, I agreed to abide the issue.

I then inquired why he had assumed a borrowed name? he replied, having disgraced the noble name of De Ribement, by marrying a woman, whom I never could raise to my own station, I determined to sink into her's under the humbler one of Lorenzo; I thought, when you should hear the circumstance, you would immediately come in search of me, and this name would better enable me to conceal myself, from the scrutinizing eye of an injured parent; I knew by an anonymous note, you would have speedy information of it, therefore was not surprised when I met you upon the Rialto; I was induced to hope, that I had not been recognized, and as you could get no information of me, you would soon quit Venice; after which I intented to have written to you, from some other place and to keep from you, long as possible, a secret, the knowledge of which, I was certain would wring the hearts of all my friends, with anguish unspeakable: being

well convinced that very night would disclose to him, the perfidy of this abandoned woman, I used no farther argument, but took my leave, desiring he would call at my Hotel, the next morning with the result; this he promised to do most faithfully.

On opening the door of the apartment, I saw the glimpse of some one gliding hastily away, concluding it might be one of the servants of the house, I thought no more of it, but left the villa, with a mind more at ease, than it had been for some time past; feeling assured Frederick would now break off this degrading connection, retrieve his honor, pledged to you, and restore that peace to his anxious parents, which he had depriv-ed them of, by his folly; impressed by this idea, I passed a calm, and placid day, amusing myself by viewing the splended buildings of Venice, which before was unnoticed by me; I first went to the Palace of St. Mark,

and beheld with admiration the grandeur of its Piazza; the beauty of the Rialto next attracted my attention, and I gazed with wonder at the extent, and symmetry of its noble arch; I contemplated the magnificent marble palaces, raising their proud and lofty heads, as it were from the bosom of the waters; I was much gratified also with the gaiety of the scene on the canal, where numerous gondolas, crouded with groupes of fascinating females were passing; some were accompanied by bands of music "when to the soft flute, the silver oars kept time" as they glided majestically along; after having amused myself with the sight of every thing I thought worthy of observation, I returned to the Hotel, and on retiring to bed enjoyed that sound sleep to which I had long been a stranger.

In the morning I awoke with invigorated strength, and spirits; I had but just

breakfasted, when Frederick made his appearance; I saw by his countenance, before he spake, the result of the trial; soon as he was seated, he told me the Signora was innocent, for she had remained at home all the evening, trying with the most affectionate solicitude, to sooth his troubled mind; she has indeed been slandered, he continued, and I trust my Lord, you will now be convinced of her innocence; I answered, with much vehemence, no, more than ever of her perfidy; she certainly overheard our conversation, for I saw some one quit the door of the room hastily, as I opened it, and this alone prevented her keeping the assignation; she well knew that at any time she could impose on your credulity; no longer remain under the influence of this syren, break the fatal spell, which binds you to her, return with me to the arms of an affectionate mother, and to the injured Mademoiselle St. Alme; Frederick attempted to urge, that even in that

case he could not make you the recompense he ought, as the Signora was legally his wife; I, in vain repeated to him, that, I could immediately procure sufficient evidence of her infamy, to obtain a divorce from her; but such was his infatuation, that no argument of mine could convince him, this abandoned woman was not a paragon of virtue; to see him thus the dupe of her cunning, caused more pity in my breast, than anger; I therefore coolly told him, my mind was most completely made up on the subject, and that he must either relinquish the father or the wife; I added you need be under no qualms of conscience, about quitting this woman, as when she finds your remittances from me cease, which must be the case, if you continue with her, and you can no longer supply her prodigality, she will quit you, to seek her fortune elsewhere, with the first fond fool, she can entangle in her snares, whom she will lead to ruin as she has you; I give you

twenty-four hours to consider of it, if you do not return by this time to morrow, with the intention to accompany me to Paris, I shall suppose you have made your election to remain here, and quit Venice immediately, that I may strive to forget I have a son so degenerate; Frederick said no more, but wringing my hand in silent agony, left the room.

In the course of the day I endeavoured to gain some information about this woman; I found she was born at Palermo of respectable parents, who spared neither pains, or expence in her education; that she was formerly most beautiful, accomplished, and fascinating; to this was attributed her ruin; for when very young she was seduced from her home, and the paths of virtue; being soon abandoned by her seducer, she was obliged to profit by her accomplishments, for her support, as her parents were inexora-

ble; having a fine voice, and being taught to sing by the first masters, she was engaged for the opera at Naples; her attractions drew the attention of many young noblemen, with whom she led a very dissipated life; being possessed of the most consummate art, she was more than once, upon the point of drawing them into marriage; but as she found her character began to be too well known at Naples, she quitted it; and became a performer at the venetian opera, where my poor Frederick was the victim of her duplicity; after marriage she left the stage, but her conduct was now if possible more abandoned than before; her intrigues were multifarious, but she was so complete a mistress of deception, that she made her ill-fated partner believe she was a pattern of conjugal fidelity; her object in gaining a husband appeared to be only a cover to her vices, and a shelter from her creditors; I here could not help ejaculating in mental agony, and is

it for such a woman that Frederick De Ribement has sacrified his rank in life, his honor, and his name!

The remainder of the day was passed, as you may well suppose, in the most conflicting sensations; at breakfast the next morning Frederick appeared not; I waited in great anxiety until the evening, still he did not come; I then thought my longer stay would be useless, and that I must trust to time alone to discover to him the real character of this woman; I therefore early the ensuing day left Venice, with an aching heart, on my return home.

The Count had now finished his melancholy story; I could conceal my feelings no longer; the conviction that Frederick had not only abandoned me, but was attached to another, overpowered me, and I again fell back on the sofa without life or motion; I

soon after began to talk in the most incoherent manner; when I became more rational, I found myself in bed, my mother, and the Countess watching me, with tenderest anxiety; it was more than three weeks before I could be removed home; sorrow and despair were so strongly depicted in my countenance, that it was apprehended by all, I must sink under the poignancy of my grief.

After some weeks, I was slowly emerging from a state of convalescence, when I had another dreadful trial to sustain, which brought on a severe relapse; soon as I was at all collected, I requested my brother, the Chevalier St. Alme might not be informed of what had happened, as I well knew his affection for me, added to his high sense of honour, would instantly induce him to avenge my wrongs, by calling Frederick to such an account as might terminate fatally for one, or both of them; St. Alme was with his re-

giment at Lyons; but such a circumstance occurring between two noble families, could not be concealed from a busy world; the report, after some weeks, reached his ears, he immediately obtained leave of absence, and set out on his journey to Paris, to ascertain the truth of it; he had got within two leagues, when he overtook the disconsolate Frederick, who was also on his road thither; soon as the Signora saw that her husband was no longer enabled to support her, and that his father had rigidly adhered to his resolution of sending no more remittances, she became less assiduous to preserve his good opinion, took no pains to conceal her real character, and at length eloped from him, with a neapolitan music master; now convinced of her infamy, he determined to obtain a divorce, return to his offended parents, and, if possible, make his peace with me; there still might have been happiness within our reach, but alas! the fatal

rashness of St. Alme destroyed it for ever; soon as he overtook Frederick, he communicated the report he had heard, and demanded the truth of it; his silence and confusion confirmed it more than words could have done; my brother would not listen to any explanation, but insisted upon avenging a sisters' wrongs on the spot; all expostulation with St. Alme, was vain, and useless; fired with rage and indignation at the insult offered to his family, he branded his antagonist with the name of coward; who, hasty and impetuous, instantly dismounted, and they retired into a wood by the side of the road; after a short combat, St. Alme proving to be the better swordsman of the two, Frederick was run through the body, and immediately expired; my unfortunate brother dropped a tear over the remains of his friend, then rode to Paris with the utmost speed, and after communicating the fatal result of the duel to his parents, left

them immediately, before the circumstances could be known publicly, that he might conceal himself, until his pardon from the king, was obtained.

I was not permitted to see him or even to know that he was there, lest the news of this distressing event might be too much for my yet weak, and feeble frame.

The Count de Ribement was prepared by letter to expect Frederick, when the dreadful information of his death was received; grief at first absorbed every other feeling, but anger, at the rashness of my brother, succeeded to it; the disconsolate father found they were seen together a few minutes previous to the duel; consequently there could be little doubt but Frederick had fallen by the hand of St. Alme;—he conceived himself compelled by the honor of his house, and the memory of his

son, to demand justice on his murderer; for being without seconds, he considered the survivor in this sanguinary conflict, in no other light; he repaired to the royal presence, and personally made his request to His Majesty; in consequence of which, orders were immediately issued, and a large reward offered for the apprehension of my ill-fated brother; he was deprived of his commission, declared an out-law, and descriptions of his person were sent to all the sea-ports, and frontier towns, to prevent his quitting the kingdom; he however baffled every effort of his pursuers, and when I came to this place had not been heard of.

The great depression of spirits so manifestly evident in both my parents, convinced me there was some hidden cause, of which I was kept in ignorance, that preyed upon their minds, and appeared to be fast sinking them into the silent grave; in vain

I begged to be made a participator in their sorrows; in vain I requested to share their grief, but the subject was always evaded.

At length my mother, in a paroxism of anguish, dropped some expressions that served as a clue to guide me to the fatal truth; it was two much for me to bear, my scarcely renovated frame was not equal to such a trial, to such an accumulation of afflictions; a fever, accompanied with delirium, seized me, and I remained many days, without a hope of recovery; my parents in speechless agony, were hourly expecting the termination of my existence; at length I fell into a sound sleep, to which I had long been a stranger; I remained so twenty-four hours, and when I awoke, although very feeble, my senses were perfectly restored; a dawn of hope was now indulged by my disconsolate friends, and a few more days brought them the pleasing assurance, that I was out

of danger; my first effort, soon as my weak state would admit, was to offer the effusions of a grateful heart to that Being who had thus, a second time, preserved me on the brink of eternity.

After the most mature reflection, I determined to quit a world in which I had experienced so much affliction, and dedicate myself for ever to my God; my parents although they wished I had not taken such a resolution, did not oppose it.

I therefore soon after commenced my novitiate in this convent, and, at the end of the time allowed for my probation, took the veil; nor have I once repented this step, all my happiness being buried in the grave of Frederick, the world was no more to me, and here my mind, entirely devoted to Heaven, has acquired a peace and tranquility, I never otherwise could have attained.

Thus sister Agatha finished her sad story, and often during the recital they blended their tears together.

CHAP. XXI.



ANGELA had some confused idea of having heard the name of St. Alme before, but she could not at first recollect where; at length, she remembered seeing it on a fragment of a letter left on the floor of Ricardo's room, the morning after the Castle had been attacked by the soldiers; the words she now was assured were these "alas my too unfortunate St. Alme," this again brought her generous deliverer into her mind; when she silently conjectured that Ricardo must have been the lost brother of sister Agatha! there

was certainly an elegance in his manners, which spoke him of superior birth; she forbore however to mention her ideas on the subject, as even if he were so, she could give of him no satisfactory account.

Six months had passed in this peaceful retreat, when one morning she received a letter from her mother, by the hand of her faithful Janet, communicating the intelligence, that the Baron Fitzormond was no more; he was seized with an apoplectic fit at breakfast, which rendered him senseless, and in a few hours occasioned his death; also, as there now was no reason for her longer continuance in the convent, it was the wish of the Baronesss that she should prepare to quit it the next day; a letter was sent to the Lady Abbess to that effect; although the father of Angela had been latterly a most unnatural one, yet she felt his death severely; the tears of filial duty fast

trickled down her cheek, as a mournful tribute to the memory of her lost parent; to lose him while under the weight of his displeasure, to die unreconciled to her, gave her susceptible breast an additional pang; her sorrow was however in some degree assuaged when she found it was now in her power to quit the convent, and that she should be enabled to devote her future days, to comfort the declining years of her venerable mother.

The Lady Abbess did not so much regret the loss of Angela, as of the prospect of having the Fitzormond estate added to the already rich endowments of the convent of St. Clair; immediately on receiving the letter, she sent for the young Novice, and addressed her thus:

I thought, daughter, when you entered this holy place, your mind had been fully

made up to abjure this world, and devote yourself to another; piety and resignation were strongly imprinted on your countenance, and I did hope in your heart also; you are now invited by your mother to quit these walls for ever; but remember there is *One* whose commands are superior to her's; a voice from heaven calls upon you to fulfil your holy intention, and devote yourself for ever to your God; return not again, I conjure you, to a world, where your youth, and inexperience may lead you into many temptations, which the syren pleasure scatters in your path, to draw you from your duty; in this peaceful solitude, care, and anxiety are unknown; the mind weaned from every earthly connection, enjoys repose here, the sure harbinger of felicity hereafter; yield not, my daughter, to this temptation, but exercise the noblest self denial, by adhering strictly to your first resolution; let not your fortitude be shaken.

Angela, with humility, but firmness, replied,—in compliance with the commands of a father, I came hither, not as a boarder, which I wished to do, but entered on my novitiate, much against my inclination; for it was then, as now, my fixed determination, never to take the veil; Heaven, I am assured, requires no votaries, but voluntary ones; inclination must accompany the sacrifice, or it cannot be accepted; my heart revolts against it, and I dare not be guilty of the profanation, to make a vow, with my lips, which my soul abjures: impious girl! exclaimed the lady Abbess, thy crime be on thy head; and immediately quitted the room, mortified at the disappointment, with which she had met.

Angela passed the remainder of the day in the cell of sister Agatha, who congratulated her most sincerely on being about to be restored to the society of those she loved;

may the dawn of your felicity, she said, be never clouded by the sorrows which have driven me from the world; mine were not light and transitory, but fixed and permanent; hopeless and incurable; the wounds of my yet bleeding heart could only be alleviated by religious retirement; these two friends had gained so much upon each other, during their residence together, as to ripen regard into sisterly affection; their minds were cast in a congenial mould, consequently both felt great pain at the approaching separation.

Angela attended vespers for the last time; for the last time her melodious voice, in unison with the full toned organ, was heard there, with unaffected piety, and devotion, offering up the hymn of gratitude, and praise to her Creator.

At length the morning arrived, which

was to take her from thence for ever; she now no longer appeared in the habit of a novice, but resumed the dress in which she first entered the convent; sister Agatha left her not a moment; they remained together until the carriage of the Baroness was announced; the trial of parting was severe: long they continued locked in the arms of each other, at length Angela summoned fortitude enough to tear herself away, and left her companion in a state more easy to be felt, than described; she gave her hand to each of the sisterhood, who were assembled to take leave of her, made a formal courtesy to the lady Abbess, which she hardly deigned to return, and then, accompanied by Janet, got into the carriage which was waiting.

Angela had endeavoured to stifle her emotions in the presence of her friend, but no sooner was she out of sight of the convent,

than she gave way to the affectionate feelings of her heart; Janet was astonished to see her mistress in tears, when she imagined there was so much more cause for joy, than grief; I think madam, she said, you have been so long within these dreary walls, and so much with these odious nuns, that you have an inclination to be one yourself; and had you been there a little longer, I do not suppose, we should have persuaded you to have returned amongst us again; for my part it gives me the horrors to look at these nuns, peeping through a grate, like a felon, with their black and dismal dresses; if all were of my mind, not the walls of a nunnery should be left standing in France.

Angela was so absorded in the recollection of her lost friend, to her for ever lost, and of the probability of her being the sister of Ricardo, that she heard not the simple prattle of Janet, who did not cease talk-

ing, until the carriage stopped at the door of the Baroness; no sooner was Angela alighted from it, than she found herself in the arms of the best of mothers; although the Baron had not been latterly either a good husband, or kind father, yet they regretted his loss severely; all his faults were buried in the grave, and his virtues alone lived in their remembrance, the manner of his death added much to their grief; when the mind is prepared for the loss of those most dear to us by a long sickness, the blow is expected, consequently the keenness of our sorrow is in some degree ameliorated; but when removed, in one sad moment, from health, strength, and life, to death, it falls with double force.

The Baron was conveyed to the tomb of his ancestors, with the splendor due to his rank; there being no male heir to the House of Fitzormond, his daughter succeeded to

the hereditary estate, and soon as her spirits were in some degree composed, she ordered the steward to attend her, that she might be enabled to inspect into her deceased father's affairs; she found the estate was encumbered with a heavy mortage; and that the family mansion in Normandy was in so dilapidated a condition, that the Baron had not been able to inhabit it for several years, but constantly resided in his house at Metz; his pride would not permit him, to curtail his expences, notwithstanding the estate descended to him much embarrassed; he kept up even a superior establishment to his ancestors, and lived in a style of splendor, and magnificence, which contributed to involve him in greater difficulties.

Angela determined to pursue a very different course from her father; the shew of grandeur, and ostentation ill accorded with her humble, unambitious mind; she imme-

diately came to the resolution of reducing her establishment and living in solitude, with her only surviving parent, until the encumbrances on the estate were removed, and the family mansion rebuilt in its ancient splendor; she consequently discharged most of the domestics,immediately sold all the numerous horses, and carriages, except one chariot, which she retained for the use of the Baroness, and herself.

Every hour was devoted by Angela, to soothe, with filial duty, the declining years of a beloved mother; their grief, for the loss they had sustained, was mellowed down by the lenient hand of time, to an affectionate remembrance; and they lived in a calm, and peaceful serenity, which, aided by religion, gave them a felicity, pure, and unalloyed, to which they had long been strangers.

As Ellen had frequently written to the

Baroness, to inquire about her amiable young friend, in whose happiness she felt so deeply interested.

Angela now acquainted her, in a long letter, with the change that had taken place in her situation, and future destiny; and sent it, by a trusty messenger to Warburgh Castle; she received, in return, a large packet from the Countess, congratulating her on her present prospects, and severely lamenting so great a distance separated them from each other; she also mentioned her intention of being at Paris in the ensuing summer, where she hoped Angela would meet her, and anticipated the delight such a meeting would give to each; much, she said, have the Count and myself regretted the loss of those happy days, we passed in your society; I have sighed in vain for the friend of my youth, the sweet companion of my walks; I have traced each spot, where

we have rambled together, but, alas! the prospect faded to my view, no longer animated by your discriminating eye, your enlivening smile; in reality we feel but one thing wanted to complete our happiness, which is to have you with us again; would to Heaven you were ever an inmate of Warburgh Castle: although your duty to an affectionate parent will not allow you to reside constantly, yet I hope you will accompany us hither from Paris, and make a temporary visit; the hope, however I fear, is a very faint and delusive one, without I can prevail on the Baroness to be of the party; to her, I hardly dare make the request, as I am apprehensive I could not tempt her to take so long a journey.

The Countess also informed Angela, that M'Donald had not forgotten his promise, as he sent a vessel lately, on purpose to inquire after her; he wrote word that the old Laird

and his mother were no more, they died within a few days of each other, full of years, and good works; one grave received them both, amidst the general lamentations of the whole Island; Miss M'Donald continued to reside with her brother, and joined him in every affectionate remembrance.

Sandy and Moggy were as well as their time of life would admit, and begged their grateful acknowledgements for some substantial proofs of Angela's regard, which had reached them safely, and enabled them to live with less labor, than they had done; they also expressed their gratification for some little presents from Janet, enclosed in those of her mistress; they hoped to see their daughter once more, before they died.

Angela had long promised her humble, but faithful friend, that when they next were at Warburgh Castle, she should from thence,

take a trip to the Orkneys; although Janet was equally anxious with her parents, that they might again meet, yet she wished to make but a short stay, as the dreariness of the Island, and the humble cottage of Sandy, would but ill accord with the scenes she had witnessed.

Perhaps with parental affection, a spark of pride might be blended, and strengthen the wish of again seeing her native shore; she anticipated, without doubt, the pleasure she would have, in shewing the companions of her early years, how the raw scotch girl had been metamorphosed into the lively talkative french woman (for by the assistance of her mistress she now spoke that language fluently) and to display to their wondering eyes, all the finery she had acquired.

A tear rolled down the cheek of Angela,

as a grateful tribute to the memory of her generous host, and hostess; the kindness of the old Laird had never been forgotten by her, nor that of Mr. M'Donald; she recollected, with pleasure, the friendly attention she had received from the whole family, their hospitality, goodness, and although last, not least in her remembrance, the unaffected piety, with which they offered up their morning, and evening orisons, to that beneficent Power, who sees the motive with the act; Angela reflected also that under the severe pressure of affliction, the sad event must occasion to their affectionate relatives, yet it would be a healing balm of consolation to the wound, when they remembered their true sense of religion here, would ensure an eternal reward hereafter.

Some months passed away in peaceful tranquility, the Baroness viewed, with ineffable delight, the ripening virtues of her daugh-

ter's mind, as they gradually were disclosed advancing to maturity; and Angela felt much pleasure in administering every comfort, and consolation, to her excellent mother.

CHAP. XXII.



One evening, when Angela, according to her usual custom, was amusing the Baroness, by playing, and singing some of her favorite airs, a loud knocking was heard at the hall door, and immediately after, a servant entered to inform her, that he had just shewn a gentleman, in deep mourning, into another room, who said he wished to speak with her, on business of the utmost importance; both mother and daughter were astonished, and lost in conjecture; who it might be, they could not possibly divine; they had lived in

such utter seclusion, since the death of the Baron, that the sudden appearance of a stranger made them feel a degree of timidity, the result of their late solitary habits, which was formerly unknown to them; they at length agreed, Angela should not see him alone; but that the stranger should be conducted into the room, where the Baroness, and herself were sitting; on entering, he bowed to each, and respectfully presented Angela with a sealed packet; soon as she turned her eyes upon the seal, she beheld the well known arms of Steinbergh; fired with indignation, she returned it unopened, to the bearer, and said, "tell your employer, that Angela Fitzormond will never again hold any communication with the Baron Steinbergh; and desire him, on his peril, no longer to persecute me;" alas madam, replied the stranger, he will never again persecute any one, for the Baron is no more; he paid the debt of nature, about a week since, and in his last

moments, desired this packet might be brought to you, soon as it conveniently could be done, after his decease; when Angela heard this, she received the packet again, and with a trembling hand broke the seal; the writing indicated to be that of a person, who, from extreme debility, could, with difficulty, hold the pen; it was so illegibly written, that it took some time to decypher it; at length she was able to trace the following words:

"As some recompense for the anxiety "I have caused you, and the injuries you "have sustained on my account, injuries, "which, but for the signal interposition of a "divine Providence, would have cost you "your life; and with the hope that this act "will manifest my sincere repentance, also "obtain not only your forgiveness, but that "of an offended Deity, at whose dread tri-"bunal I must soon appear, I have bequeath-

"ed to you my estate in Bohemia, which is "the only one, not entailed, and all the per- "sonal property I die possessed of; consist- "ing of money, plate, jewels, household fur- "niture, horses, carriages &c. to be totally at "your own disposal: in testimony thereof, I "have signed this in the presence of two "competent witnesses,

Steinbergh."

Angela was, at first motionless with surprise, she read it again and again, and for a long time could only believe it an illusion; she perceived by the colour of the ink, and disjointed sentences, that it had been written at different times, and evidently in great pain; on further inquiry of the messenger, he told her the Baron had been long ill, but he harboured delusive hopes of his recovery, until within a few days of his dissolution, when his danger became too evident for him any longer to doubt it; he conse-

quently then began seriously to think of settling all his worldly concerns; after having directed his will to be made in her favor, he was anxious to write the enclosed, which he did supported by pillows, and with extreme difficulty; soon as he had finished, his mind felt more at ease, and the next morning he expired, apparently a true penitent; also that the packet was previously in his possession, with strict injunctions to deliver it himself as directed; Angela, lifting up her eyes to Heaven in gratitude, exclaimed, "peace to thy ashes, unhappy man, may God grant you that forgiveness, which I have done long since;" the messenger then requested to know her commands relative to the property left her; Angela answered, the business was so sudden, and unexpected, that she could not compose her mind sufficiently at present, to give any directions, but that he should soon be informed of her wishes by letter; after having left his address, and tel-

ling her he was steward to the late Baron, also that she might rely the utmost care of every thing should be taken until he received her orders, he respectfully took his leave.

The Baroness was as much surprised at this event as her daughter, and rejoiced no less at it; it came so sudden, that had not the written evidence of the fact been before her, she would have doubted the reality; one thing alone reconciled the gift to Angela, that was, the Baron left no relatives, in which case nothing would have prevented her making restitution of the property to those who were more justly entitled to it; she received no other pleasure from riches, than as affording the means of doing more extensive good; her first object would now be to gratify immediately, what she knew was the desire of her deceased father, that of removing the encumbrances on the family estate, rebuilding the mansion in its ancient magnificence,

and making such addition, by purchase, as would cause the house of Fitzormond to raise its diminished head, and shine with a splendor far superior, to what it had done in its days of prosperity.

Although Angela felt herself compelled, by filial duty, thus to renovate the sinking fortunes of her family, yet the pomp of state, and shew, would lessen, not add to her felicity; her mind was free from ambition, and in retirement she found her greatest happiness; a happiness, far superior in her estimation, to any other; but she was sensible, that as heiress of a noble house, with now a much increased property, it became an imperious duty not to remain entirely in seclusion, but to keep up the dignity of her illustrious ancestors, by taking her rank in that society, she was formed to adorn; though painful to her feelings, she knew the sacrifice must be made.

After Angela had consulted with her mother, she determined to send her own steward immediately to take charge of the personal property left her, and to convert it into cash; except the Baron's family plate, which she conceived disposing of, would be a disgrace to the noble armorial bearings engraved upon it, and an unpardonable slight of the memory of the donor; the jewels, for the same reason, she resolved not to part with; some few of the horses were also to be kept for her own increased establishment: after the steward had made this arrangement, he was to proceed to the estate in Bohemia, to examine into the condition of the tenants, and to assure them every thing that was just, and reasonable should be done by her, to render them comfortable and happy, while they continued to merit it; he was also desired to distribute a liberal donative, amongst the vassals of the deceased Baron.

The religious, and contemplative mind of Angela daily offered up her heart-felt thanks to the great Disposer of all human events, for the late bountiful gifts bestowed upon her, and prayed most fervently that this accession of wealth might be properly used by her, in contributing to the charitable and benevolent purpose of relieving the distresses of her fellow creatures; she hoped her heart would never be corrupted by increased possession, but that she might consider it, as a talent intrusted to her charge, not alone for the benefit of herself, but to share it with the afflicted, by healing the sorrows of the widow, and wiping away the tears of the orphan; no longer allowing penury and want, to be inmates of their dwelling.

With this pleasing prospect before her, he mind of Angela was calm, and composed,

she therefore hastened to fulfil the duty she owed to friendship, by acquainting the early companion of her youth, with the good fortune which had lately attended her; she wrote the Countess Warburgh a long, and most affectionate letter, anticipating the pleasure of meeting her at Paris in a short time, which she before despaired of, as the Baroness felt an aversion to again mixing with the society of the metropolis, and Angela's sense of duty would on no accout, induce her to leave her only surviving parent, although strongly urged by her mother to that effect; but as this accession of wealth, in some degree compelled her to emerge from obscurity, and appear as the heiress of the illustrious House of Fitzormond; also as it was a necessary etiquette that she should be presented at court, and by whom could she with more propriety be presented, than by the venerable Baroness, who on this occasion consented to accompany her daughter; she

had now the gratification of assuring her beloved Ellen, that she would certainly be at Paris, early in the next summer, where she should expect the Count and herself.

After the lapse of a few weeks her faithful Steward returned, having duly executed the commands of his mistress; she found by him that the property far exceeded her most sanguine expectations, as the Baron had large sums both in the Banks of Vienna, and England; also that the estate in Bohemia was of much greater value than she supposed; the smallest tenants were living in a state of poverty and wretchedness, heavily oppressed by their landlord, and that oppression increased by the villainy of the Baron's agent, who subjected them to every species of extortion; the liberal gift that Angela had desired might be distributed amongst the vassals, was a generosity they had been so totally unaccustomed to, that they were

struck with mute, wonder, and astonishment; they considered it the hand of bounteous Heaven, extended for their relief; not an eye but was bathed in tears of gratitude; not a tongue but implored blessings unnumbered on their benefactrix.

Angela, feeling for the distresses of her tenants, and anxious to mitigate them, gave an immediate order for the dismissal of the present agent, and sent the eldest son of her steward to supply his place; she also directed their exorbitant rents to be reduced to what was fair, and equitable; thus making the noblest use of riches, by administering to the wants, and adding to the comforts of all around her; she was not less attentive to the wants of her tenants, and dependants on the domains of the Fitzormond estate, her bounty was also extended most liberally to them; she renovated the aged, exhilarated

the young, and diffused peace, content, and happiness amongst every family.

The winter glided away, in the society of her affectionate mother, swifter than Angela wished; she was so fond of solitude, and retirement, that she felt as little inclination as the Baroness, to mix with the bustle of a court, and the society which her rank in life would compel her to enter into; the greatest pleasure she anticipated, was that of again beholding her beloved Ellen; she now almost daily expected a summons to that effect; her expectations were soon gratified, for at the commencement of the ensuing month, she received a letter from the Countess to say, that the Count, and herself were arrived at Paris, and they hoped the Baroness, with Angela would take the earliest opportunity of joining them there; it was however, necessary to remain a short

time longer at Metz, until every thing was arranged relative to the immediate rebuilding of the Fitzormond mansion; soon as that was settled, and avant courier was dispatched to Paris, to procure an hotel for their reception, and with a letter to the Countess Warburgh containing the welcome intelligence, that Angela, and her mother would commence their journey thither in a week at longest; a new travelling chariot was bought for th occasion, and as they intended going themselves, by easy stages, the coach was to proceed with all possible expedition, taking all the servants, with the exception of Janet, who had permission to accompany her mistress; at the appointed time, they commenced their journey, and on the evening of the fourth day arrived at Paris, when they were driven to an hotel in the Rue St. Honoré, which had been previously prepared for them, and immediately afterwards Angela found herself fast locked in the em-

brace of the Countess Warburgh, who with the Count,, her husband, was waiting to receive them; for some moments these two friends were insensible to every thing but the happiness they felt at this meeting; the Baroness, and the Count who were strangers to each other, remained silent spectators of the scene; Ellen soon recollecting the circumstance, and said, my dear Warburgh, let me introduce you to the excellent mother, of my best, and earliest friend; but here, she added, turning to Angela, you want no introduction, and I am assured your joy, at seeing her once more, is not less than my own; seeing her not as a fugitive, driven from her paternal roof, to seek our friendly roof, to seek our friendly shelter, but restored to her hereditary honours, as heiress of the noble house of Fitzormond.

Ellen now congratulated the venerable Baroness, whom she had not seen since her

marriage, on the evening of her life being thus animated, by the bright prospects which opened to her daughter; the Count felt much pleasure at again beholding his amiable young friend, but ah, said he, taking her hand, there is no pleasure without alloy; I must now look in vain for a return of those delightful days, when, as an inmate of Warburgh Castle you constituted so large a portion of the felicity of Ellen, and myself; what a chasm was made in our happiness when you left us; our walks, and rides appeared solitary and forlorn; no longer enlivened by your fascinating society; hope, like a smiling cherub, offered consolation to us from the prospect of you return; but alas that dawning hope is now faded from our view, as other ties, and other duties call you: believe me, Angela replied, I shall never be ungrateful for the kindness of such valued friends, who generously nurtured me under their fostering wing, when I was so much in

need of protection; and be assured I should ever consider the days of felicity I then enjoyed as the happiest of my life, had they not been imbittered by the displeasure of a father.

It was arranged that evening Angela should be presented at court the same day, as the Count and Countess were, and that it should take place soon as the necessary preparations of dress, equipage &c. could be made; the royal family were at present at Versailles, but it was expected they would return to Paris, in the course of the ensuing week; soon as this matter was determined, Ellen and her husband took their leave, and went to their own hotel, which was near the Tuilleries, but not before they had agreed to dine with each other alternately, when they were disengaged: as the Baroness had travelled by such easy stages, she was less fatigued than, from her advanced age, might

be expected, but yet as much so, as to render it necessary she should retire early to rest, therefore soon as her friends had left them, she gladly availed herself of the opportunity.

After a week spent in the constant society of each other, the important day arrived, which was to introduce Angela into the presence of royalty, for the first time in her life; Louis the Sixteenth had ascended the throne of his ancestors, but a few months before, and his subjects had not ceased their rejoicings at the event; the court was brilliant, as no monarch ever possessed in a greater degree the affections of his people; Angela was surprised at the magnificence of it; the Count, and Countess Warburgh were first introduced into the royal circle, by the Austrian Ambassador; next followed the lovely heiress of the House of Fitzormond, conducted by her venerable mother; after

a few complimentary words from his majesty, she was presented to the queen; the first sight of the beauteous Antoinette, beggared all description; Angela was speechless with admiration; she appeared like a descended Deity dispensing blessings from a flowing Cornucopia; her expressive eyes beamed goodness, gratitude, benignity; every look was directed to her, every tongue grew wanton in her praise and converted admiration, into idolatry.

Angela was received most graciously, but timidity so far got the better of her, as to make her betray great confusion at the moment she was presented; the queen saw it, and felt for her, but fearing to increase it, said little as possible and soon dismissed her, with a benignant smile.

The trial, she so much dreaded, being over, Angela had now time to look round,

and view the brilliant assemblage, with which the presence chamber was crowded; at length she saw a Cavalier advance to be presented, on whom every eye was turned; from the numbers between her, and the object of universal attention, she could only discern his figure, not his face; he was dressed in the uniform of a Colonel of Cavalry; soon as he quitted the royal circle, he was again lost in the crowd; so much curiosity was excited by his appearance, that she was induced to listen to the various observations of these who were the nearest her, with whom he made the principal topic of conversation; she soon understood it was the Baron St. Alme, who had now first appeared at court, since he was outlawed for killing the son of Count De Ribement in a duel after a long exile, at the request of his widowed mother, the queen had used her influence with her royal partner, and caused him to be restored to the rank, and hereditary estate of his de-

ceased father; he had also been promoted to the command of a regiment of Hussars.

Good Heaven! sighed Angela, this must be the brother of sister Agatha! a second sigh escaped her, as her heart whispered this must be Ricardo! from the story related to her in the convent, she had no hesitation in believing St. Alme, and Ricardo to be the same person; anxious to justify herself from the charge of ingratitude to her deliverer, and wishing to know whether he would recognize her, she earnestly looked at every person within her view, but in vain; no countenance like Ricardo's could she trace; she was lost in surprise at the singular circumstance that had occurred, and was still gazing intently around, when the Count Warburgh recalled her to her recollection, by offering his services to attend the Baroness, and herself, to the carriage which was waiting for them; as she quitted the royal apart-

ments she involuntarily cast a long and lingering look behind, but the object she wished to see was still invisible; she was therefore compelled to trust to time, and chance, to throw him again in her way.

CHAP. XXIII.



ANGELA was determined to keep the cause of her anxiety an inmate of her own breast alone, lest her intentions might be misconstrued; what she considered only a laudable wish to make a suitable acknowledgement for the debt of gratitude she owed Ricardo, might be ascribed to other motives, therefore not even to her venerable mother, did she relate the circumstance.

Now Angela had gone through the formal etiquette of being presented at court,

she was introduced into the first circles at Paris; she generally went only accompanied by the Count, and Countess Warburgh, the Baroness, from age and infirmity usually gave the preference to remaining at home; her daughter had the same preference, could she have been permitted to indulge it; amidst the gaity of the Metopolis, her heart sighed for solitude, but she knew her rank in life must subject her to some sacrifice of this nature; which she now the more readily made, as she hoped that in some of the brilliant circles she frequented, chance might throw the Baron St. Alme in her way; but to her surprise she neither saw him, or heard his name mentioned, and of course delicacy forbade her making the inquiry.

One evening she went to the Theatre Francoise, and on the entrance of a gentleman into a box on the opposite side, she distinctly heard a lady near her whisper to her

companion, there is St. Alme, from his melancholy look, you would rather suppose he had lost his hereditary honors, instead of regaining them; her eyes were immediately directed to the spot; she saw it was an officer by his regimentals, but as one of the pillars obstructed her sight of him, she could not discern his features; she hoped he might change his seat, and that then she should have a better view of him; but vain were her hopes, for he remained fixed there all the evening; the only possible chance which was left her, was that of meeting him in the lobby when the performance should be ended, but this was frustrated, as he quitted the box the moment the curtain fell; and Angela was obliged to wait sometime until her carrige could draw up: alas, she thought are we never again to meet? shall I never be enabled to acquit myself of ingratitude to my preserver? while she was thus meditating on the subject, the carriage was an-

nounced, and she was immediately conducted to it by the Count.

The next day a grand ball and supper was to be given by Count Warburgh to his Parisian friends; every preparation was tastefully arranged, under the immediate direction of Ellen, and Angela; as the latter had never heard the Count or Countess mention the name of St. Alme, she dare not indulge a hope of his being present; the rooms were crowded to excess, to most of the company Angela had previously been introduced; but there was one young nobleman, she had never seen before; to a good person, he seemed to add a large share of vanity, and self conceit, gay and volatile, he appeared to enliven every circle he went into; he laughed with the men, made love to the women, who seemed to endeavour to vie with each other for a share of his attention; all appeared so universally pleased with his society, that

Angela felt her curiosity excited to know who he was; she therefore took an opportunity of asking Ellen; who informed her it was the Marquis De Villeneuve, that when a child he had succeeded to his father's title; he only last year attained the age, at which he was permitted to shake off the shackles of his guardians and take possession of his parental estate, which had much increased in value, during a long minority, and returned from his travels, over most of the continent of Europe, but very lately; by the indulgence of a fond mother, he was rendered a perfect spoiled child; from his infancy he had been gratified in every wish, and was a stranger to contradiction; Ellen added, all the young women in Paris are enraptured with him, and would be proud to surrender, for better for worse, the moment he proposed an honourable capitulation; but this, he appears in no hurry to do; he distributes his smiles equally to all, without giving a pre-

ference to any; as he is now coming towards me, I will introduce you, and you shall try whether you cannot render, this hitherto impenetrable heart, vulnerable; before Angela could reply, the lively Marquis was by her side; Ellen presented her to him as the daughter of the Baron Fitzormond, and the intimate friend of her youth; to any friend of yours, the Marquis answered, I shall feel myself honored in being known; and after gazing on Angela for some time, with fixed attention, whispered the Countess, under what cloud has this refulgent meteor remained concealed, that I have never seen her before? she has chiefly lived in retirement, was the reply of Ellen, but refulgent as the meteor is, it will, to the Marquis De Villeneuve be the meteor of a day only; to morrow other attractions will succeed, and its brilliancy be dimmed; can you really suppose me so insensible, said the Marquis? I find your fair friend must not come to you for a character

of me; then bowing to Angela requested the honour of dancing with her; on receiving her consent, he took her hand, and led her to join the dance which was about to begin.

The Marquis was an elegant and graceful dancer, his manners were polished, and his conversation abounded with wit, and lively reparteè; Angela was obliged to be gay in spite of herself, and appeared to take greater pleasure in society this evening, than she usually did; she was more animated than her retired habits had permitted her to be in general, yet a transient cloud would sometimes overshadow her expressive countenance, when she looked round and saw not the Baron St. Alme; but the sprightly Marquis soon dissipated it, by his unceasing volubility; after two dances were finished, the surrounding belles waited, with anxious expectation, to see where this young, and fascinating Adonis would make his next se-

lection; all were on the tiptoe of expectation, each flattering herself with the hope, that she would be the favorite Sultana; but alas to the general disappointment, Angela alone was found to be the polar star, which rivetted the attention of the Marquis for that evening, for with no one would he dance but herself; and when the Baroness Fitzormond, with all the tender anxiety of an affectionate parent, requested her to desist, fearing such great exertion, to which she had, until lately been unaccustomed, might prove injurious to her health, the Marquis declined dancing also; he kept close by Angela the remainder of the evening, and so completely did he appear fascinated with her conversation, that he had neither a look, word, or smile for any one else; in vain did the other females attempt to rally him, and draw him from the magnet, which seemed so powerfully to attract him; one object alone absorbed his whole attention to every other he was perfect-

ly indifferent; the Countess Warburgh, who had been a minute observer of him, now whispered the Marquis, I shall have a higher opinion of my young friend than ever, as she has been enabled to do, what was reckoned an impossibility, to fix the attention of the Marquis De Villeneuve for more than two hours; I must therefore begin to think you have not quite an invulnerable heart; he immediately replied in another whisper, my heart was never before assailed by such attractions; who can be invulnerable here! poor Marquis, answered Ellen, I pity you, how deeply you are wounded! at this moment the Baroness appeared much fatigued, and signified a wish to return home, a wish from her mother, was ever a command to Angela, she therefore desired one of the attendants to order the carriage; when it was ready the lively Villeneuve handed her to it, the Baroness was conducted by Warburgh; and the Marquis, with much regret, took his leave.

No sooner was breakfast finished the next morning, than Ellen came to rally her friend upon her recent conquest; you know not, she said, what a miracle you have achieved, in fixing the attention of Villeneuve; no female could ever yet attach him to herself more than a few minutes, you fixed him for two hours at least; before he saw you, he was like a weathercock, never could stick long at one point; no doubt, Angela replied, his natural versatility returned, soon as I left the room; no indeed it did not, resumed Ellen, for immediately after you went, he retired also, to the infinite mortification of all the single ladies, and possibly to some of the married ones; he is, I dare say not so wounded answered Angela, but a night's rest will heal it; the novelty of a first sight being over, I shall only come in for a share of his attention with the rest of his female acquaintance; at this moment the servant announced Count Warburgh, with the Mar-

quis Villeneuve; Ellen smiled, and whispered Angela, what think you now of his wound being healed, the fascination has lasted more than twelve hours, he will soon become a pattern of constancy.

On entering the room, the Marquis, with his usual volubility, asked Angela a hundred questions, without giving her time to answer one; he then turned to the Baroness, and congratulated her on the good looks of her daughter, and herself, after the fatigue of the preceding evening; when the Countess, tapping him upon the shoulder, asked, have you nothing to say to me? you hardly deserve it, he replied smiling, for the unfavorable opinion of me, with which you wished to impress our young friend; but you must acknowledge, Ellen answered, it was a just one; you used, my gallant Marquis, to rove from flower to flower, the attraction of one moment was repelled by that of the

next; if you continue this amazing constancy a few hours longer, I shall really begin to think there is some stubility in your nature; and that at length an arrow from the quiver of a certain little God, has been found sharp enough, to penetrate a heart, which has hitherto resisted all attacks: this conversation was unheard by Angela, and the Baroness, who were talking with the Count at another part of the room.

The day being fine, a ride was proposed in Bois de Bologne; the Count prefered being on horseback, the Baroness, and Angela were to go in the carriage of the Countess; there being a vacant corner in it, Villeneuve requested he might have the honour of filling it, to which Ellen consented on condition, that the Marquis would promise not to be from the present object of his attention, for the remainder of the day; Angela felt much confused at this raillery of her friend, and entreated her to desist.

The Bois de Boulogne being the resort of all the beauty, and fashion of Paris, there was a fine field for the loquacity of the Marquis; not a person passed but he had some observation to make; in fact he related various anecdotes of almost every body he met; some of which doubtless had their foundation in truth, and others proceeded from the prolific brain of the lively narrator; he nodded to one, smiled at another, and took especial care to let all see, that the polar star, which was to guide him to happiness, was the beautiful heiress of the House of Fitzormond; he had been so much flattered by the attention of the sex, that he imagined he might exclaim with Cæsar, *I came, I saw, I conquered;* his vanity therefore led him to suppose, that he had only to make his proposals to Angela, to be accepted; after pointing out to the ladies, every one he knew, which was every one he saw, he at length drew their attention to a gentleman at some distance on horse back, he was turned from

them, consequently his countenance could not be seen; there is a man, continued the Marquis, of whom I can make nothing; he has too much of the penseroso cast for me; he associates very little with any body, but appears as if he had met some severe disappointment in love, for I am sure nothing else could make a man so melancholy; do you think, Ellen replied, a disappointment of that nature would make you melancholy? is it possible any thing could disturb the gaiety of the Marquis De Villeneuve? I thought at one time it could not, he answered, but the experience of a few hours has convinced me of the contrary; at the same moment casting an expressive look at Angela; Ellen observing her confusion, turned the conversation by saying, you have raised our curiosity, without gratifying it, for you have not told us who this Knight of the woeful countenance, is? he has but just emerged from a self banishment which he was

forced to undergo, answered the Marquis, to prevent being brought to justice for killing a young nobleman in a duel, where there were no seconds present, to see fair play; he has however, at length obtained the king's pardon, and has recently taken possession of the estates, and title which devolved to him, by the death of his father, it is no other than the Baron St. Alme; at this name the countenance of Angela was suffused with blushes; to conceal them she drew her veil over her face, and turned from the scrutinizing eye of Ellen; she was absorbed in thought, during the remainder of the ride, and much regretted her singular destiny, that her deliverer should frequently be so near her, and yet no opportunity offer of clearing herself from the charge of in gratitude, of which he had too much apparent reason to accuse her.

It was agreed upon, during their ride,

the two ladies should dine that day with the Count and Countess Warburgh; the Marquis requested he might be included, and then they could all go together to an entertainment, which was to be given that evening, by the Austrian Ambassador.

Villeneuve, after dinner, enlivened the whole company by his brilliant sallies of wit; but Ellen continued to rally him incessantly. on his being able to give his undivided attention to one favorite solong, until a look from Angela, expressive of her uneasiness, induced her to desist.

The Baroness appeared more disposed to return to her Hotel, than to partake of the evening's Fete, but from from the united persuasions of the whole, and a promise from Angela to retire from the busy scene, the moment her mother was desirous of it, she at last consented.

On arriving at his Excellency's Hotel, Angela was struck with the magnificence of the apartments; every thing was arranged in such a manner as to impress her with wonder, and admiration; it seemed to vie with what she had read of the luxury of the East, and was far superior to any thing she had seen since her arrival at Paris; the various exotics, which were distributed, with much taste, in every room, breathed a fragrance like the perfumes of Arabia; and the reflection of the many lights from the chandeliers, in the mirrors, with frames of burnished gold, extending from the cieling to the floor, resembled the sun in its meridian.

The Count and Countess Warburgh presented their friends to the Ambassador, and his lady, who received them most graciously; Angela was immediately recognized by the former, he having seen her once, when she resided at Warburgh Castle; he conver-

sed with her sometime, until the concourse of visitors coming up, precluded it; the rooms were soon filled almost to suffocation; all the fashion of Paris, and its environs was there; the crowd was so immense, that with much difficulty a promenade could be formed through the suite of rooms which contained them; the Marquis offered one arm to the Baroness, and the other to Angela, and appeared, by his great attention to the latter during the whole evening, to wish it to be understood that he was a favored lover; Angela was perfectly ignorant of his intentions, or his thoughts, therefore felt gratified with his society, considering him only as the friend of her dearest friends, Ellen and the Count; so unaccustomed was she to the ways of the world, that she never suspected the construction which might be put on this extreme, and constant attention of Villeneuve; she was the envy of the women, without being conscious of it; for although many

attempts were made, by the sprightly belles of Paris, to detach the Marquis from the object of his idolatry, they were all utterly fruitless, the magnet of attraction in Angela was too powerful.

Just as they got to the door of the first apartment, the Marquis turned round to Ellen, who was walking behind with the Count, and said, "here comes your Knight of the woeful countenance; the very St. Alme we talked of this morning is now entering the room;" before the Countess could answer, he was close to them, and exclaimed with much surprise, "Good Heavens! do I see Angela Fitzormond, who, I supposed, was secluded for life in the convent of St. Clair?" you do indeed, answered Angela, whose looks betrayed the pleasure she experienced at meeting him again, and I behold in my deliverer the Baron St. Alme, by whom I must have been considered as totally deficient of gratitude

for the vast debt I owe him; the Baron took her half extended hand, she then presented him to her mother, as the preserver of her life; also to the Count, and Ellen, from whom he received, as well as from the Baroness, suitable acknowledgements; during this time the Marquis stood gazing in mute wonder; after some further conversation St. Alme regretted that he was prevented from continuing the remainder of the evening with them, being obliged to rejoin the friends who had accompanied him, but requested permission of the Baroness to wait upon her the next morning at her Hotel, which being most readily granted, he took his leave.

I verily think, said the Marquis to Angela, whose face was suffused with blushes, you have the power of magic, and can transform us to what you please, for you have been able to do more than all the women of Paris, to animate the frozen St. Alme; never

did I see his countenance illumined with a smile before; I should almost imagine that you were the guardian angel of his fate, and by your fascinating powers, can transform him from the Penseroso, to the Allegro, at your pleasure; at this speech, by which more appeared to be meant, than met the ear; Angela blushed still deeper, and said, "you know not, perhaps, that to the Baron St. Alme, I am indebted for the preservation of my life."

The Marquis during the remainder of the evening was unusually thoughtful, and grave; Angela was the same; the Baroness soon complained of fatigue, and her daughter was happy to assign that as a reason for retiring so early; Ellen and the Count thought etiquette required of them to remaim, until a late hour, in compliment to their Ambassador; De Villeneuve requested permission to attend them home, he con-

ducted the ladies to their carriage, and after seeing them safe to the Hotel, took his leave more abruptly than usual.

CHAP. XXIV.



Soon as they were alone, the Baroness began to bestow many encomiums on St. Alme; his noble and generous conduct, in preserving the life and honor of her child, had made a deep, and lasting impression on her mind; Angela joined most warmly in her praises, being impelled by the strongest sense of gratitude, and they both wished to see him again, that they might return him their thanks, in a more suitable manner, than they could do, amid the bustle, and noise of a crowded assemblage of people.

When Angela retired to rest, it was a long time before she could sleep; many and various were the thoughts which agitated her mind; she felt rejoiced that the virtues of St. Alme had been rewarded by being restored to a rank in society, which he was calculated to adorn: from him her thoughts were turned to Sister Agatha; she brought to her recollection the many kindnesses received from her, while in the convent; and pictured, in imagination, the pleasure she must derive from the knowledge, that her brother had received a pardon, and been put in possession of the title, and estates of his ancestors: she at length fell into a sound repose, and it was late in the morning before she awoke; when the first object that struck her, was the Baroness, by her bedside, watching every look with the utmost solicitude, fearing lest indisposition had caused her to lie beyond her usual hour; her fears being dissipated on finding it was only occasioned by over fatigue of the preceding night;

she left the apartment, and was soon followed by Angela to the breakfast room.

For some time afterwards they continued in anxious expectation of their visitor; it was not long before he was announced, but he appeared very different from the St. Alme of the evening before; his face was no more illumined with smiles; but he was again the Knight of the woeful countenance, as Ellen had humorously designated him; he did smile most certainly on approaching Angela, but it was not the smile of happiness; it rather betrayed a feeble effort to hide the feelings of a mind ill at ease; when addressing her, there was an inexpressible tenderness, blended with a deep melancholy, in his manner, which forcibly struck the Baroness, as well as herself; the bosom of Angela glowing with the most lively effusions of gratitude, she expressed her acknowledgements in animated and impressive language; she explained how desirous she was to see him,

that she might apologize for the apparent rudeness, and incivility in her conduct, when she parted with him so abruptly, at Warburgh Castle, without thanking him, even in the slighest manner, for the great service he had rendered her; she was about to explain that her anxiety to see her beloved Ellen, at the moment, absorbed every thought, and on her almost immediate return to seek him, he was no where to be found; but he would not hear her; saying he required no apology, as he never had, or could entertain a thought prejudical to her; could I have possibly supposed you were in Paris, he added, I should certainly have taken an early opportunity of waiting upon you; but I have lately been so little in the habit of mixing with the gay world, that I knew not what was going on in it, and never having heard your name mentioned, consequently supposed you were immured for life in the gloom of a cloister; my surprise, and joy, at seeing

you last night, may be better felt than described; the Baroness requested he would join their party at dinner, but this he declined, stating in a confused manner, an indispensible engagement prevented him; he also added that he should be obliged to quit Paris in three or four days, and feared he should not have another opportunity of calling upon them; the mother and daughter both expressed their regret at his sudden departure, and Angela could not help saying, "am I no sooner restored to the society of my protector, and deliverer, but I must be again deprived of it?" St. Alme was evidently in great agitation, which appeared to increase the longer he continued; when he arose to take his leave, after saying what was necessary on the occasion to the Baroness, he took the hand of Angela, with much emotion, and added "may every blessing attend you; and may he to whom you are about to consign yourself for ever, be as sensible of

your numerous virtues as St. Alme;" he then hastened from the room, leaving both ladies at a loss to know, to what he could allude by this observation; and in utter surprise at the singularity of his conduct this morning, which was so totally opposite to his behaviour, on the preceding evening.

De Villeneuve could not help observing the undisguised pleasure which appeared in the countenance of Angela, when she met St. Alme at the Austrian Ambassador's, and ignorant of the circumstance which occasioned it, he began to think, being accepted by her, was not so certain, as his vanity had led him to suppose; this gave a check to his almost never failing spirits, and he felt equally glad to return home: after a restless night he determined to bring the matter to the test at once, by immediately writing to her, and making an offer of his hand, and heart; he did so, soon as he had breakfasted; dispatch-

ed it by his servant, who was to say, by his desire, that he would call himself, on the ensuing morning for an answer; to amuse his mind until then he ordered his horse and rode towards St Cloud: on his return in the evening he found a letter on the table, with trembling hand he broke the seal, and read as follows:

"Angela Fitzormond thanks the Mar-"quis De Villeneuve for the high opinion he "has formed of her, and for the proof he has "given of the sincerity of that opinion, by "the disinterested offer he has made; she will "always be proud to rank the Marquis "amongst the number of her friends, but "must decline ever considering him in any "other light." Villeneuve could hardly believe his eyes did not deceive him; he read it again and again; it was certainly a refusal, a decided, unalterable one; he had never before met with such a check to his

vanity; that *He* should be rejected! *He* for whose smiles all the beauty of Paris had been contending and after having given the world reason to suppose that he was the *accepted* lover of Angela, could not bear again to appear in public as the *rejected* one, he therefore determined to return to Italy, and the next morning by day light had passed the barriers of Paris on his way thither.

St. Alme had not long quitted the Baroness, and Angela, when the letter from Villeneuve was brought to her; the former thought the match unexceptionable; but the latter declared she never would give her hand, without her heart could accompany it, she felt for the Marquis the sincerest esteem, but he was not the man she could ever love; she was therefore instantly decided on the subject, and did not delay writing an immediate answer.

The answer had but just been dispatched, when Ellen came into the room; what, she said smiling, are you without Villeneuve? wonders will never cease; can he live so many hours from you? is his extraordinary fit of constancy at an end? indeed I think it has lasted beyond expectation, for so changeable a being; what makes you look so serious this morning? is it the absence of your dangling lover? come, come cheer up, do not despond, or spoil that pretty face by crying, I will go and seek the inconstant swain, and bring him once more sighing at your feet.

The Baroness saw the confusion of Angela, at the raillery of the Countess, therefore explained to her the offer of the Marquis, and the decided rejection of it by her daughter; Ellen certainly considered it as a very eligible one, but still approved of its being rejected by her young friend, as esteem was

the warmest sentiment she could bestow upon him; she however thought Villeneuve, volatile as he was, calculated to render any woman happy that could love him, as he possessed a fund of good humour; from the rejection of a man, so perfectly unexceptionable, and for whom half the females of Paris were pulling caps, she now began to suspect, what Angela herself was ignorant of, that gratitude to St. Alme, with whose story she had lately been acquainted, had ripened into affection; but she kept her suspicion carefully concealed within her own breast.

It was so long since the Baroness had mixed in the gay circles of a large Metropolis, and Angela never having done so before, the impropriety of receiving such marked attention from the Marquis De Villeneuve, previous to his making any declaration of his sentiments did not at first strike them;

all Paris of course considered him, as the future husband of Angela; and she must now appear very fickle, and capricious, thus suddenly to have discarded him; the Count and Countess Warburgh were not ignorant of the conjectures which were formed, and heard the whispers of the fashionable world; but it being an event which they wished most cordially to take place, thinking it would contribute to the happiness of their friend, they kept such rumours a secret from the party concerned, lest it should throw an impediment in the way; they now considered much blame attached to the Marquis, for not having declared his intentions sooner.

The delicacy of the mind of Angela, could not, under such circumstances, again submit herself to the public gaze; on her appearance without Villeneuve, she well knew many reports would be circulated, at

her expence, many comments made; by secluding herself from society for a time, she would avoid, at any rate keeping alike, by her presence, the various conjectures that would be formed; and in this case, the story, like the ephemeral insects of the day, would soon sink into oblivion; the Baroness, the Count, and Countess all applauded this resolution, and in consequence determined to leave Paris sooner than was originally intended; which Ellen would do with less regret, as Angela and her mother had agreed to accompany their friends, for a few weeks, to Warburgh Castle: the Count had some business to detain him about a fortnight longer, and their departure was fixed for the expiration of that time.

Angela found by letters from her steward, the family mansion of Fitzormond, would not be fit for her residence, until the ensuing Autumn, when Ellen had promised to re

turn with her to take possession of the renovated seat of her ancestors; and the Count was to join the party there in the Spring; he was so much attached to the pleasures of the chase, that he could not be induced to be absent from home, during the season for hunting.

Neither Angela, or her venerable mother, in the least regretted this seclusion; by nature and habit attached to retirement, the vortex of fashionable life had no charms for them; the society of the Count and Countess Warburgh was all they desired or wished; they met daily; as Ellen declined going out, only when etiquette rendered it absolutely necessary, she passed many evenings with them, while the Count was engaged in different parties, with his numerous friends.

As they rightly imagined, the circumstance afforded conversation at most of the

tables in Paris; for some days, the names of the Marquis De Villeneuve, and Angela Fitzormond, were the theme of every tongue; the women, piqued that Angela should have the power of rejecting the man, to whom they all aspired, were not sparing in their censure of her; the men who on the contrary, rejoiced, the insufferable vanity of Villeneuve had met with such a check, were as lavish in their commendations; but like other things, in a few days, the novelty ceased, and the subject was heard of no more.

Ten days had expired out of the fortnight which was fixed for their departure, and they were preparing to quit Paris at the appointed time; the Countess was gone to pay her last visit to the lady of the Austrian Ambassador, and the Baroness with her daughter were passing the evening by themselves, when a letter was brought and delivered to Angela; she at first conceived it

came from the Marquis De Villeneuve, but on looking at it again she saw it was not his writing; lost in conjecture she at length broke the seal and read as follows: "The "Baron St. Alme requests Mademoiselle "Fitzormond will have the goodness to pe-"ruse the enclosed, and favor him with her "commands upon the subject it contains." On reading these lines written upon the envelope, the state of the heart of Angela might be easily discovered in her countenance, the crimson became of a deeper hue upon her cheek, and her whole frame betrayed an agitation to which she was before a stranger; her anxious parent, in silence watched every look, and action; in a few moments with as much composure as she could assume, she opened the packet that was enclosed, and read the contents.

CHAP. XXV.



History of St. Alme.

Before I communicate to you, the cause of my again intruding myself on your notice, after having taken, as I then feared, an everlasting farewell, I beg leave to acquaint you with some circumstances of my former life, and to explain by what means I was placed in that degrading situation where I first had the happiness of being known to you, a situation disgraceful as it was, I do not now regret, as it enabled me, more than once, to

become the protector, under Providence, of Angela Fitzormond.

My sister I understand made known to you, a part of my eventful history, and the result of my unfortunate rencontre with Frederick De Ribement, until I hastily quitted Paris, after receiving the farewell embrace of those dear parents, one of whom it was my hard fate never more to see, I knew there was not a moment to be lost, as the vindictive disposition of the Count De Ribement, I was fully aware would stimulate him to exert the powerful interest he possessed with the king, to obtain an order for my apprehension; also that no pains, expence, or legal cunning would be spared, to make the act I had committed be constituted murder, that my life might be sacrificed to the manes of his lost son; there were no seconds of either side to witness the combat and attest; Frederick came by his death in a manner

consistent with the rigid laws of honor; fired by the wrongs a beloved sister had sustained from him; wrongs which would admit of neither excuse, nor apology, and by his marriage rendered irreparable, my impatience would not allow me to wait until we could each procure a friend to attend us, but I insisted on immediate satisfaction; all this, I well knew, must militate strongly against me, and of course strengthen the cause of De Ribement; notwithstanding which, I would instantly have given myself up to justice, had not the earnest entreaties of my aged parents urged me to quit Paris, and keep myself concealed, until the anger of my prosecutor at Frederick's death, had in some degree subsided; his feelings were too acute, at this moment, to listen to reason, or be content with any sacrifice short of my life; impelled by the knowledge of the anguish of mind, I must give the venerable authors of my being, by continuing longer

to hesitate, I tore myself away from all I held dear on earth, in a state of mental agony, great beyond description.

It was some time before I could collect my scattered thoughts sufficiently to fix upon my destination; at length I determined upon embarking for England; not to travel the direct road, but by the circuitous route of Brussels and Ostend: after riding some hours, I took advantage of a thick wood to shelter me from view, and to put on the disguise which my anxious mother had hastily packed up for me; I had then no longer the appearance of an officer of cavalry, but of a merchant; although my dress took away from me almost every trace of my former self, I determined "to make assurance "double sure" by rubbing my face and hands with the juice of a berry, that I found in the wood; this completely altered my complexion and thus equipped, I could travel with more security.

As my horse, and self, both stood in need of refreshment, I entered the first town I came at, and rode boldly to the principal Inn; finding, upon inquiry, that I could be accomodated with a comfortable bed, I determined to remain there that night; being much fatigued I retired early to rest, and the first thing I noticed, when I came down in the morning, was a large posting bill pasted on the wall, describing most accurately my person, and offering a very great reward for my apprehension; all strangers were ordered to be strictly examined at every sea-port, and at the towns on the frontiers, before they were permitted to quit the kingdom; I now well knew my getting to England was impracticable, as although disguised, I could not, when examined, shew any credentials to prove I was the character I assumed; to proceed on my original route, I saw, was certain detection; I therefore turned my horse's head towards Paris, concluding no

one could suspect me, traveling in that direction; soon as I again reached the wood I had left, I struck into the thickest of it, that I might, thus concealed from every human eye, think of some plan for my future safety.

I remained there all the day, with my horse quietly grazing by my side; various were the schemes I devised, but none could I bring myself to adopt; I lamented, more than once, that the imperious laws of honour should subject its votaries to such severe trials; at length overcome by both mental and personal fatigue, towards evening I insensibly fell into a slumber; from which I was awakened by the voices of men, and the trampling of horses; thinking they were the officers of police, in pursuit of me, I immediately jumped up, took a pistol in each hand, and placing my back against a tree, told them I was determined to sell my

life dear, and sooner than surrender into the hands of justice, would defend myself until the last; "the first that lays a hand upon me" I exclaimed in a loud, and determined voice, "is a dead man;" they had formed a circle round me, but seeing me prepared for resistance, did not advance; one of them replied "we are no officers of justice, nor will we hurt you; you are a brave fellow, and deserve a better fate, than to be left alone in this forest, without a friend to help you; who, and what are you?" I answered "one without a home, shelter, or habitation; unjustly outlawed by his country, for killing his antagonist in a duel, who was the destroyer of the peace and felicity of a much loved sister, dearer to him than life;" my wrongs being rankling in my breast, I unguardedly made this confession, but no sooner had it escaped my lips, than I repented, fearing these men might be tempted by the reward to betray me; my fears on that head were

however soon dissipated, as, after a short consultation with his comrades, the person, who had before addressed me said, "if you will join our company, you shall be protected, we have a retreat hard by, where you may effectually conceal yourself from your pursuers; such as we can bestow, you shall be freely welcome to partake of;" not caring where, and with whom I took shelter, could I be assured of safety, I immediately adopted their proposal, and mounting my horse was soon an inmate of that Castle, to which I afterwards had the happiness of conducting you.

Upon inquiry I found it formerly belonged to the noble family of Delatourville, but had been neglected to be repaired, for many years, until at length it was totally abandoned, and suffered to fall into its present ruinous state, the massy battlements had crumbled into decay, and its once lofty tur-

rets, had been so loosened by the destructive hand of time, as to become the sport of every breeze, threatening each moment to tumble a shapeless ruin, into the moat below; its walls were incrusted with ivy; and its marble pillars so mutilated, and defaced, as no longer to bear the resemblance of their ancient splendor; some part of the furniture remained; the drapery hung in decayed, and tattered fragments, which made the place still more desolate, and forlorn; the idea of its being haunted contributed to render it a safe asylum; there could not possibly be a more secure shelter afforded me; for here I might in perfect safety remain, I conceived, until the persecution of the Baron De Ribement was at an end.

Soon as I had taken a cursory view of the Castle, I joined the inmates of it at supper; after which I looked round amongst my new companions, that I might know

whom, and what they were; as the wine exhilarated their spirits, it unlocked their hearts, and I found most of them were men who had failed in mercantile speculations, and from that, had become dealers in contraband articles which they had carried on to a great extent on each side of the water, by smuggling prohibited goods into both France, and England; until at last their property was seized, and they were declared outlaws; in their flights, to avoid their pursuers, they, by chance, met with this Castle, where they agreed, for a time, to take up their residence; some of them appeared to be men, who had seen far better days; after expending all the means of subsistence, they were compelled, by the imperious calls of hunger, to levy contributions upon the public; and this they did rather by supplication, than force, never having recourse to the latter, but in the last extremity.

My reflections, on retiring to my pillow, were not of the most pleasing kind, and my first idea was to make a hasty retreat; but alas! whither was I to retreat? pursued by the vindictive rage of a powerful, and implacable enemy, where could I shelter my devoted head? nothing but the prospect of an ignominious death, seemed to await me; I harrassed my almost distracted mind with various conjectures, yet none could I resolve upon, by which I might be in complete security, but that of remaining where I was; and however revolting to my feelings, I felt myself under the cruel necessity of adopting it, until time should enable me to determine on some better expedient.

As they had frequent disputes among themselves, which, in many cases, I was the instrument of suppressing, they proposed to elect me their captain, conceiving I was better qualified than they were to preserve

harmony and unanimity; I only accepted it, on this condition, that my power should be absolute, and my determination final; after having this point agreed upon, I assumed the command, and made them more like a troop of foragers in an enemy's country, for their daily subsistence, than a lawless banditti; their chief plunder consisted of provisions, and of those only barely sufficient for a maintenance; under such degrading circumstances I was unwillling to disclose my real name, therefore took that of Ricardo; I however fully determined to continue no longer with them, than until I conceived the ardour of pursuing me had so far abated that I might be enabled to pass without suspicion, in the disguise of a peasant, which I had provided.

I had been three months thus immured, when I was ordained by fate to be the preserver of your life; after our first interview

in the Castle, it was my determination to continue to be your protector, until I had conducted you to a place of safety; I therefore resolved to accompany you to Germany, and never more to return to my companions; but making use of this pretext for leaving them became no longer necessary, as the attack of the soldiery, and the dispersion of us all, happen'd the next day; when I arrived with you at Warburgh Castle, and saw the portal closed, which took from my view your receding steps, perhaps for ever, at least my fears induced me to think so, I felt anguish unutterable; the few days I had passed in your society, beguiled me of my sorrows; the display of the ripening virtues of your enlightened mind, which appeared just breaking from the bud to bloom in full luxuriance, challenged my warmest admiration; and awakened in my breast a passion to which I had been hitherto a stranger: I beheld you

"Pure as the dew drop, which impearls the Rose,"
" And free from blemish as untrodden snows."

I silently resolved that if I should ever again be restored to my rank in society I would offer that hand, and heart to you which I well knew could never be devoted to another.

Soon as I had lost sight of you, I rode slowly away from the Castle, not knowing where to direct my wandering steps; at length after I had gone about a mile, I came to a village, in which I found a small house, with a board over the door signifying, in uncouth letters, travellers might have refreshment there; I directly entered it, and after taking care of my horses myself, the luxury of an ostler not being to be had, sat down to a dish of eggs and bacon, on which, with some excellent bread, and good cheese, I made a capital repast.

While meditating what my future des-

tination should be, a servant from the Castle came in, and I found by his conversation, Count Warburgh wanted a gardener; having some little skill in horticulture, I determined to make application for the place, as it would not only afford me a secure retreat, but I should have the happiness of daily beholding you; it appeared the act of Providence which sent me thither, and little did I then expect it would give me the unutterable pleasure of again preserving you from a villain; it was however necessary I should disguise myself, even from you; after having taken leave of my new companion, without disclosing my intention, I rode to the next market town in the morning, and having there disposed of my horses, I bought a suitable dress, and by the help of a wig, and broad brimmed hat, metamorphosed myself so completely, that had you been possessed of the eyes of Argus, you could not have discovered me.

In the evening I returned to the Castle, was soon hired by Count Warburgh, and invested with my new office, which was not that of a laborer but a superintendant; I had frequently the pleasure of seeing you, while pursuing my occupation with the Countess; I observed, with delight, those roses again restored to your cheek in their pristine beauty, the lustre of which had for a time been dimmed by fatigue, anxiety, and alarm; often have I gazed, in respectful admiration, as you wandered through the shrubberies, with your beloved Ellen leaning upon your arm; but whenever you approached, I was obliged to avoid you, lest the Countess should ask me any questions in your presence, in which case my voice might betray me; I sometimes wished I had sought an abode far distant, as I found the frequent sight of you, could not fail to add fuel, to what, I feared, was an hopeless passion.

At length Baron Steinburgh came to the Castle; one morning early I saw him in earnest conversation with his confidential servant in the garden; I was hidden from their view, by the surrounding shrubs, but they shortly came so near me that I could easily hear what was said; at the mention of your name, my attention was instantly rivetted to their discourse, and I was soon in possession of their designs respecting you; this trusty valet, who had long been the repository of his masters secrets, and the participator in his crimes, suggested the plan of his speedily returning, and becoming again an inmate of the Castle; this was to be effected, by the Baron falling from his horse, when hunting very near it, and pretending to be much hurt, in which case he well knew the humanity of Count Warburgh would order him to be conveyed thither; the better to put his sheme in execution, he was to remain some days confined to his room, and on his apparent re-

covery being completed, to take an opportunity of carrying you off by force in the dead silence of the night, and his servant was to have a carriage constantly in readiness for that purpose.

I felt very anxious to convey to you some idea of your danger, and determined, at all events, to be your protector; but knew not how I could give you any intimation of it, without discovering myself; I wrote the words "Beware of Steinbergh," on a slip of paper, and folded it up as a note, which I addressed to you; when I saw you come into the garden, I dropped it unperceived in the path you were walking, but you passed it without notice; it was my intention to drop it another time, and I hoped with better success, but to my infinite mortification for a day or two I did not see you, at last chance revealed to me a method, by which my wishes might easily be accomplished.

As I was strolling one evening in the environs of the Castle, which I was frequently in the habit of doing, I perceived an opening that had the appearance of leading to some subterraneous abode; an iron grate laid near, but being overgrown by grass, and weeds, it had not apparently for years been appropriated to what I conceived to be its proper use, that of covering the aperture before me; impelled by an insurmountable curiosity, I determined to explore this hidden recess, for which purpose I obtained a light at a neighbouring cottage; on entering I descended a flight of steps, and then came to a succession of vaults, which led to the foot of another staircase; having ascended nearly two thirds of it, I by chance touched a wainscot partition on my right hand, a panel of which to my great surprise, flew open, and I found myself in a chamber, I soon recognized to be yours; unfortunately I had

not the billet, intended for you in my pocket; I in vain looked around for pen and ink, or pencil, nothing of the kind could I perceive; therefore the only feasible plan for me to adopt, was to remain on the other side of the wainscot, until you retired to rest, and then give you the friendly warning I had so long wished to communicate; I quitted the chamber immediately and carefully closed the panel, but not without taking an accurate view of the secret spring, and affixing a mark, by which I might find it again; I descended into the vaults until I thought you might be in bed, when I placed myself near the part of the wainscot that opened; I perceived you were in the room, but that your attendant was with you.

Soon as she retired I pronounced in a hollow voice, the words written in the note; fearing you should be oppressed with sleep,

and might consider the circumstance only as a dream; or not sufficiently understand it; probably being in a state between waking and sleeping, I determined to repeat the warning words more, in a yet louder, and more solemn tone; when finding I had arous- you from your bed, and that you were walking about the chamber, I was confident you had heard me; I intended to quit the subterraneous abode immediately, but recollected the drawbridge was up, and that I could not get into the Castle, I therefore had no other resource than to explore the staircase as far as I could; I gently ascended it, and on reaching the top passed through a small door, on to one of the turrets that surrounded the building, where I soon perceived another, which also led to a staircase, this I decended, and reached my own room, unseen by any body, where I instantly returned thanks to Heaven, that accident had, at

length, given me the opportunity I had so sought, of warning your innocent, and unsuspecting mind of the danger that awaited you.

CHAP. XXIV.



History of St. Alme continued.

As it had been previously agreed upon, Baron Steinbergh was soon brought into the Castle apparently much hurt by a fall from his horse; I watched both his servant, and himself, with the most anxious solicitude; soon as I found he had quitted his chamber, I well knew the time of your trial was approaching, consequently resolved to defeat their machinations, if possible; on the next

day I saw some preparations for his departure, therefore concluded the attempt, to take you away, would be made that night; in the evening I went to the armory took down a suit of armour, and conveyed it, by the staircase in the turret, into the first vault; soon as the family were retired, I again descended thither, by the help of a lantern, which I took with me, and having equipped myself completely in the coat of mail, I repaired to the secret opening, where all was quiet; at length I plainly heard the voice of Stenbergh in your apartment; I delayed appearing until the last moment, hoping your resolution, and remonstrances might induce him to abandon his design, without my interference; but finding neither tears, or entreaties had any effect, and that he had nearly succeeded in taking you off, I touched the spring, the panel opened, instantly I rushed in between you, and cried "Forbear."

I thought it possible the Baron might be proof against all superstitious fears, and attack me with his sword, in that case my armour would have protected me; I was nevertheless prepared for self defence; but soon as I appeared, the villain fled, with horror, and affright strongly depicted in his countenance; nature overcome, and exhausted by the resistance you had made, caused you to fall insensible on the floor; I was more than once on the point of raising you up, but conceiving such a mysterious figure, would add to you terrors, rather than occasion them to subside, and seeing your attendant there, I immediately quitted the apartment, closed the panel, and retired into the vault, when having disincumbered myself of my ponderous dress, I hung it in its proper place, before its absence could have been noticed; on entering my chamber, I again offered a grateful tribute of praise, and adoration, to that Being who is ever the protector of virtue.

I now hoped (but vain was the hope) that you would continue, for the future, unmolested; I saw you daily in the garden, with the Countess; sometimes, lost in admiration, my eyes were intently fixed upon you; but the moment your looks were directed towards me, I was obliged hastily to witheraw them, fearing under my disguise, you should trace the features of the unfortunate Ricardo, the victim of an almost hopeless passion; I often endeavoured to come to the determination of nipping it in the bud, by removing myself from the object that inspired it; but no sooner did you appear, than such a resolution vanished like the morning dew; with ceaseless anxiety I regretted my fallen, and degraded situation, which prevented me from disclosing my sentiments, and knowing my destiny at once; before the lingering hand of time should restore me to my hereditary rank and possessions, you might probably be anothers'; this

distracting thought I dare not dwell upon, but strove to discard it, with its earliest birth.

Your sudden disappearance, soon after, threw all the inhabitants of the Castle into great distress, especially when we found the yacht, which, we had every reason to suppose conveyed you away, was the property of Baron Steinbergh, and that consequently you were in his power; but how much was our distress augmented by the melancholy account we received, that you had sunk into a watery grave, in the morning of your life: your return afforded us unutterable joy, after we had for sometime mourned your loss, conceiving you had for ever quitted this sublunary world; it was an event so sudden, as almost beyond the bounds of possibility, that I was long before I could think it more than a dream, or transient vision; even the sight of you did not dissipate my doubts; I

rather believed it a phantom, an illusion of my eyes, than reality; but when that well known voice assailed my ear, when the dulcet sounds of it vibrated to my heart, my mind received the glad conviction that it was your *very self*, raised from the brink of death, by the mysterious hand of a protecting Providence.

In order to guard against another surprise, I, at humble distance, watched your steps, until by the stern command of a relentless father, you were once more torn from us; I saw you depart accompanied by the Baron Fitzormond, and I may venture to say from the Count and Countess, to the lowest domestic not an eye was dry, lamenting that our tears and pity were all we could give; grief was not confined to the Castle only; the peasants, to whom you had often been the almoner of your beloved Ellen, invoked blessings on your head, and then remained,

transfixed in silent sorrow, until you were lost to their view.

Although the happiness of being near you was the only motive that kept me at Warburgh Castle, yet as I well knew I dare not then venture into France, and considering it a place of safety, I determined to continue it, as my residence, until some more favorable circumstances might enable me to remove with security; another powerful inducement was, that there only I had a chance of learning any intelligence of you; I was for a long time, a prey to the most distressing suspense; when the Count, and Countess were in the garden, I frequently listened to their conversation, but notwithstanding your name was often mentioned by both, I could hear nothing from which I might draw any inference that could give me a clue to find out your destiny; my impatience, to know whether you had been forced into the

arms of Steinbergh was so great, that I could with difficulty conceal my agitation; as the Countess of late had, with her accustomed affability, often discoursed with me on botanical subjects, I resolved to ask her what had become of you; an opportunity soon offered, and she seemed pleased with my inquiry, as it was an additional proof how much every one was interested in the welfare, and happiness of her young friend; with a smile of condescension she acquainted me, that you had been placed by you father in the convent of St. Clair, and on account of your steady refusal to become the wife of your persecutor, soon as your noviciate was ended, you were to take the veil; though, in either case, lost to me for ever, I was convinced you would enjoy far greater happiness, as one of the sisterhood, than all the riches of the world could have afforded you as Baroness Steinbergh; that time, and the soothing balm of religion must restore your mind to

a serenity you never could have known with a villain; your resolution, and fortitude claimed my unbounded admiration; my heart was overwhelmed with grief, when I reflected I should see you no more, yet it was a considerable alleviation to my feelings to know you were in a place of safety, where the tyranny of an unfeeling father could no longer distress you; to the world you had met with but little to attach you; the short time you had been in it, your paths were not strewed with roses, but thorns; the sacrifice was certainly great you were about to make, but under such adverse circumstances, the best you could adopt, as you would now obtain that peace the world could not have afforded you, a peace which passeth all understanding.

As my parents were completely ignorant of my abode, to ease their anxieties I felt desirous to get a letter to them, but I

was apprehensive it might lead to a discovery of my situation, therefore I did it by an indirect channel; recollecting a school-fellow resident at Paris, I resolved he should be the medium of communication, as I well knew in him I could place the utmost confidence; I wrote immediately requesting he would inform my father where I was; I begged him to give me an answer as early as possible, to address me by my assumed name of Le Roche, and inclose it under cover to Count Warburgh, whose permission I had obtained for that purpose.

A month elapsed without hearing from him, I however did not despair, well knowing the posts, between Germany, and France, were very irregular, and that letters were often detained on the road; at last the expected letter arrived, I anxiously broke the seal, and the first news that caught my eye was, my father had paid the debt of nature;

I could read no more, the paper fell from my nerveless arm, and I continued in an agony of mind beyond description, until a flood of tears came to my relief; after having paid this tribute to the memory of my departed parent; I assumed fortitude sufficient to read the residue of the letter; I also was informed by it that the Count De Ribement died just previous to my father, and that my mother embraced the earliest opportunity, after becoming a widow, of presenting a petition to her sovereign, requesting a pardon for me, and that I might be restored to the title and estates of my ancestors; the petition had been received most graciously, with a promise that an inquiry should shortly be made into the circumstances of the case; also that there was a well grounded hope, the prayer of the petition would be complied with, especially as no opposition was expected from the family of the unfortunate Frederick; my mother

would have written, I was informed by my friend, had not his cautious advice prevailed upon her to deny herself that gratification, until she could be the herald of my pardon, and restoration.

Three months elapsed without any more news from Paris, but at the expiration of that period, the long looked for packet reached me, directed in my assumed name; soon as I had opened the envelope, a black seal, and my mother's well known hand met my anxious eye, the address was by the title of Baron St. Alme, this I knew to be the harbinger of my success; the letter, from my only surviving parent was most kind and affectionate, it acquainted me that the king, after mature deliberation, and considering the provocation I received, by the insult offered to a beloved sister, had been pleased to grant me a full pardon, and a complete restoration to the title and estates of

my father; also, farther, to signify his gracious pleasure that I should have the command of a regiment of Hussars, to make up for the military rank I had lost.

I involuntarily fell upon my knees, and poured forth my gratitude to Heaven for this great blessing; after which I could not help reflecting, how much more valuable it would have been, could I have shared it with her, who had such full possession of my heart; alas, I mentally ejaculated, had not the precipitation of an obdurate parent driven her from the world, and secluded her for ever in a convent, I might now, without a blush, have solicited her hand; feeling my mind was too firmly devoted to its first attachment, ever to admit of another, I determined on a life of celibacy, and to dedicate the remainder of my days, to the duties of my profession, and to the filial task of comforting the declining years of my excellent mother.

To avoid the necessity of again repeating my melancholy story, I resolved to keep the circumstance a secret at Warburgh Castle, and only told the Count, that, in consequence of the death of my father, I was under the necessity of going immediately to Paris; to prevent surprise, or inquiry, I took my wages, (although I did not want for money, having had a remittance enclosed in the packet I received;) these I felt a pleasure in distributing amongst those objects, in which you took the most interest, and procured a fresh invocation for blessings on your head, when I pretended I gave it by your order; the Count, and Countess Warburgh expressed much regret at parting with me, and requested me to come back soon as I conveniently could; I thanked them for their kindness, but assured them my business was of that nature, as to admit no prospect of my returning to Germany; I must confess I also felt some regret on my part, to leave a

spot, which had afforded me a secure asylum, and where I had been so long under the same roof with Angela Fitzormond; before I quitted it, I retraced each favorite path you had accustomed yourself to walk, and sighed deeply at the thought, that the object which once used to enliven them, was lost to me for ever.

Early the next morning I took my departure from the Castle on foot; the first large town I reached, I threw off my disguise, and purchased clothes more suitable to my situation, and bought a horse to pursue my journey.

I had reached as far as Verdun, when I was unable to proceed from indisposition; on sending for medical assistance, the disorder was pronounced to be a rheumatic fever, which although it did not immediately endanger my life, detained me for three weeks;

at the expiration of that time I was not able to ride on horseback, therefore hired an easy travelling carriage to convey me to Paris.

The meeting between my mother and myself, under such circumstances is better felt than described; my pallid looks too truly told her, I had been suffering on the bed of sickness; she watched me with parental tenderness, and soon restored me to perfect health.

I had no wish to go into society, but etiquette rendered it necessary I should attend the drawing room early as possible, that I might be presented to the king, on coming to my title, and on my promotion; also take that opportunity of returning my personal thanks to the monarch, for granting the prayer of my petition; the day was fixed, and I was most graciously received both by Louis, and his august consort; as the pe-

culiar circumstances of my case caused every eye to be fixed upon me, I was glad to quit the presence chamber, and return home, soon as the ceremony of presentation was at an end, and I could with propriety leave the royal circle.

I sometimes rode upon the Boulevards, sometimes in the Bois de Boulogne, and occasionally went to the Theatre; but all invitations I resolutely refused, until the Austrian Ambassador gave a route; his cards were very general, not a person of rank but received one; my mother imagined that my total seclusion from society must injure my health, as well as spirits, therefore at her earnest and anxious entreaty, which was strongly seconded by two officers who were formerly in the same regiment with me, and had just arrived at Paris, I agreed to accept it, and accompany them thither; but how can I describe my sensations on entering the

room, to distinguish you in the first party that I met; I gazed with wonder, and astonishment; scarcely could I credit the evidence of my senses; my countenance fully indicated the joyful feelings of my heart, on the occasion; I would gladly have devoted the remainder of the evening to your society, but delicacy forbade my intrusion into the party you were with, especially as the Count and Countess Warburgh were there, by neither of whom I wished, at that moment, to be recognized as their former servant, Le Roche; nor could I, with propriety, leave the friends who came with me; therefore most unwillingly parted from you, anxiously anticipating the happiness I should experience from the interview that was promised me on the ensuing morning; no longer grief and sorrow were inmates of my breast; those pleasing prospects which I conceived were for ever vanished, once more took possession of my mind, exhilarated my spirits, and ani-

mated my whole frame; I was, in every sense of the word a new creature, for hope again smiled upon me with all the loves, and graces in her train.

But not long was I permitted to enjoy the pleasing anticipation of future felicity; soon was the cheering prospect annihilated; soon each fond idea was nipped in the bud; on going to the upper part of the further room, after having paid the usual compliments to the Ambassador, and his lady, my ear caught the sound of your name, from a party who were in earnest discourse near me; I anxiously listened with breathless expectation, and heard you were engaged, and soon to be united to the gentleman, with whom I saw you, who was the Marquis De Villeneuve; this direful news was like a thunderbolt to me, it struck to my heart's core, and awakened every faculty to a keen perception of my loss; my companions dis-

covered the change in me; to their repeated inquiries I pleaded sudden indisposition, and went home soon as the carriage could be procured.

My ever anxious mother was alarmed at seeing me back so early; I assigned as the reason, that the excessive heat of the rooms, and the various perfumes from the different exotics, were too powerful for me, but I now felt revived; I soon retired to bed, sleep however fled from my pillow, and the night was spent in restless anxiety, and vain lamentations at my destiny; I dreaded the approaching interview with you, as much as I before desired it; and would have avoided it, if I could have done so, without a full explanation of my sentiments; I consequently determined to see you, for the last time; to disguise as much as possible my agitation, and endeavour to summon fortitude for the task I had to undergo; after which I resolv-

ed to leave Paris for my regiment, soon as I could possibly arrange some affairs of my deceased father's, that I might not again be exposed to the risk of meeting you; my feelings at the interview I am confident I need not explain, they were too visible in my countenance; the tremor, and agitation of my whole frame could not fail to be observed by you; I must have appeared quite a different being; hope, and joy no longer animated me, but I was the pale, wan image of despair; I felt the severity of the trial too much to bear, therefore was obliged to tear myself from your presence, sooner than I intended, and rather abruptly; I immediately hurried home, and to prevent the inquiries of my mother got to my chamber unperceived, threw myself on the bed, and there gave way to the acuteness of my feelings.

I endeavoured, at dinner, to meet the scrutinizing eye of a parent with as much

composure as possible, but she was not to be deceived; she saw my indisposition was seated in the mind, and something laboring in my breast, that I endeavoured to conceal; her entreaties were most strenuous to be the sharer of my sorrows, but this I declined, assuring her however that I would strive to discard from my breast any circumstance which gave me uneasiness, in a few days she should see the remembrance of it, was entirely effaced; to know the happiness of her son was lost for ever, would have been a severe blow to the tranquility of her declining years, consequently I resolved to conceal it from her, by assuming a cheerfulness, very foreign to my heart.

My two young friends visited me every day, and endeavoured to amuse me, with the frivolous chit chat of the fashionable circles at Paris; one morning they informed me, the Marquis De Villeneuve had received

so severe a check to his intolerable vanity, as to become the subject of conversation throughout the whole town; I had hitherto listened to them with a complete apathy, and indifference, but the name of Villeneuve aroused me from my lethargy awakened all my feelings, and excited my curiosity; I eagerly exclaimed what of him? the Marquis, continued my friend, is well known to have been a spoiled child from his cradle; the task his parents began, was finished by the Parisian Belles, being possessed of a handsome person, a large fortune, and capable of whispering in the female ear a number of these sundry nothings, those sweet blandishments of flattery which are so pleasing to the greater part of the sex, and that inexperience, and vanity are too often apt to construe into love, he became an object of admiration with all the women; urged by parental solicitude, that his large fortune would be most desirable for them, on the

one hand, and prompted by a wish of their own, on the other, to excite the envy of their sex by having the preference given to them, all the coquettes of the first circles made a dead set at the gay Marquis; sometimes like the grand Signior, he threw his handkerchief to one, sometimes to another, but his exclusive attachment was never long fixed upon any; one day he inspired hopes, that next crushed; until Mademoiselle Fitzormond appeared, whose beauty, and virtues were the theme of every tongue; Villeneuve felt the influence of such charms, and she alone shone as the magnet that could attract him; insensible to all others from the moment of first beholding her, she seemed to have the magic art of fixing his affections, which had hitherto been so unstable; he followed her like her shadow, and whenever she appeared, he was her constant chaperon from which the busy world naturally drew the inference, that he was an ac-

cepted lover; and was he not? I said with an earnest impetuosity, that manifested my feelings on the occasion, and created much surprise in my excellent mother, that I should take so warm an interest in a stranger; patience, patience answered my friend, and you shall hear; the Marquis certainly conceived himself so and deeming it one of the impossibilities of human nature, that he could be refused, had not even made an offer, fully imagining he had only to communicate his wish, and acceptance would follow of course; he considered it a mere form, but as it was necessary to be observed, he wrote a billet doux to acquaint the lady, she alone was the happy woman, on whom he would condescend to bestow himself for ever; but to the infinite mortification of poor Villeneuve, the fair one rejected this delectable gift; his sensations were indescribable, when he received in answer, a polite, but a positive, refusal; ever before having been accustom-

ed to behold his wishes no sooner formed, than gratified, he felt this humiliation the greater; humbled, abashed and disappointed, he determined not again to encounter the public gaze, but early the ensuing morning, quitted Paris for Italy.

Here my friend finished his narration, this was indeed a cordial to my drooping spirits; the embers of hope, which were nearly extinct, began to revive, and were soon kindled by it, into a flame.

I have now written you my eventful history, and being restored to my hereditary rank, and estates I am placed in a situation that enables me to offer you this hand, and heart which have long devoted to you; on your fiat does my future felicity, or misery depend; but I beseech you, let that be only a secondary consideration, your own happiness the first; consult that inward monitor

your heart, before you answer; probe it to the quick; lest gratitude for the few services I have rendered you, should be mistaken for love.

ST. ALME



CHAP. XXVII.



Angela, after having finished the packet, gave it to her mother, earnestly requesting her to read it with attention, then quitted the room; the Baroness, after perusal of it, could not but admire the magnanimity of the man, who had, more than once, been the preserver of her daughter; had watched over her with the tenderness of a parent, and shielded her from so many dangers; the proofs of the sincerity of whose attachment were so numerous, as to admit little doubt but the future happiness of Angela might

safely be intrusted to his care; the anxious parent felt she had but a very few more years to number in this swiftly passing scene, and thought it would soothe the pangs of separation, to leave her daughter such a protector.

Angela now entered the room, and saw by the countenance of her mother, the contents had not displeased her; "well madam," she said, "what answer must I return?" the Baroness replied, "the answer your heart dictates;" she then candidly confessed she prefered St. Alme, to any man she ever saw; that his generosity, and nobleness of mind first won her gratitnde, which had since ripened into love; her fond parent assured her the proposal met with her full approbation; the next morning therefore a favorable answer was dispatched to the Baron, who soon availed himself of the permission he received to wait upon Angela; a meeting under such

circumstances is not to be described; an explanation had taken place with the mother of St. Alme, who, anxious to behold her future daughter, on the second visit accompanied her son; the beauty, fascinating manners, and good sense of Angela, made a deep impression on the venerable matron, she was also charmed with the affability, and kindness of the Baroness Fitzormond, and all parties appeared mutually pleased with each other.

When Ellen was informed the offer had been made, and accepted, she began to rally her young friend upon it; "what," she said, "no sooner is one lover discarded, than another is inlisted in your train; you are quite a monopolizer of beaux; I think the ladies must rejoice when you leave Paris, for they do not stand one solitary chance, while you are here; you certainly possess some magic power, which draws all their admirers to

you; perhaps you will be surprised, replied Angela, to find my new beau is an old acquaintance of yours; impossible, answered Ellen, I never saw him, until I came to Paris, and he was pointed out to me by Villeneuve, by the designation of "the Knight of the woeful countenance," Angela then replied "your acquaintance has been of a much longer standing, it commenced at Warburgh Castle;" "who is this mysterious stranger?" said Ellen, "for I am confident St. Alme was never there since I became the mistress of it;" "indeed but he has though" cried Angela, with a smile; "suspend your curiosity until you have read this packet, which will give you a full explanation;" Ellen eagerly took it and bade her friend adieu for the morning.

At dinner, she returned with the Count, and running into the room said, with a smile, "so I find my faithful gardener Le Roche was no other than St. Alme in disguise, who,

Proteus like, took that shape to be near the object of his idolatry; to what will not love transform us! who could, for a moment, suppose, that wig, and tremendous large hat concealed a lover of yours, who condescended to become a domestic servant, that he might now and then obtain a transient glance of two bright eyes, and occasionally hear the soft music of the fair Syren's voice, who had thus enchanted him; but where is he? Warburgh, and myself liked him so well in his assumed character, that we are anxious to welcome him in his real one;" the Count added, "and by a title, that will be ever dear to us, the destined husband of our beloved Angela."

Ellen now joined in the sincerest congratulations, on the prospect there was of the future felicity of their young friend; and that a life, which had been clouded by misfortune, was now likely to terminate in hap-

piness, and peaceful tranquility; but one thing they both insisted upon, which was that this unexpected event, should not delay the intended visit to Warburgh Castle; also that the wedding should take place there; to prevent the gossiping circles of the town again making Angela, the theme of their conversation, she determined to continue in the utmost privacy during the time she remained at Paris, which was now obliged to be prolonged for a few days; St. Alme and the Baroness were to be invited to accompany them; no sooner was this plan proposed, than the Baron, with his venerable mother, who were to dine there, arrived to ratify it, with some little variation.

After the necessary introduction to the Count, and Countess Warburgh, by whom St. Alme was most cordially welcomed, not as a stranger but a friend, the late agree-

ment was brought upon the carpet; it was cheerfully subscribed to by the other party concerned, only with this difference, that they could not accompany their friends to Warburgh Castle at the time proposed, the Baron being obliged to be present, at the approaching review of his regiment, which was quartered at Lisle; his mother had also some business that would detain her at Paris for the present, but they both promised, soon as possible, to join their family circle in Germany.

This matter being definitively settled, the Count and Countess, with Angela, and the Baroness Fitzormond left Paris, and travelled, by easy stages, towards Warburgh Castle.

As they came in sight of its well known walls, various, and many were the thoughts that arose in the mind of Angela; she re-

flected that when she first entered it, she was a fugitive from her parental home, and sought that shelter, and protection, which her generous friends had so amply bestowed; she was torn from thence, by one, whom, as he had made every possible recompence to her for his conduct, she would no longer name by the epithet he merited; on again reaching it, she had just been delivered, almost miraculously from a watery grave; at the stern command of an unrelenting father, she once more left its hospitable roof; but now was returning to it, blessed with riches, honors, and the affection of the only man, for whom she ever felt an attachment; returning to unite her fate with his for ever: as she took a retrospective view of these events, she paid a humble, but silent tribute of adoration to that omnipotent Power, who, by unseen ways, had conducted her from misery, to happiness, had watched over her tender years, and shielded her from every

danger; she was quite absorbed in these reflections until aroused from them by the rejoicing of the concourse of peasants assembled to welcome the return of the Count and Countess; they were arranged by old Peter, the porter, on each side of the road, leaving only a space for the carriages to pass; every countenance beamed with pleasure, every voice resounded with acclamation; Angela beheld each well known face with joy, and from the window of the carriage nodded to those, who more immediately came within her observation; at the sight of her, their acclamations redoubled, and did not cease, until the carriages had past the drawbridge, and got within the Castle yard.

The serenity of the weather, added to the pleasure of the scene, it was a beautiful evening, at the commencement of summer, and the sun was reflecting its last golden rays on the bosom of a calm unruffled ocean;

variegated nature was in her gayest attire, dispensing fragrance all around; gentle peace, with her handmaid smiling plenty, made the vallies sing with joy and gladness.

Angela would accept of no other apartment, than that she last occupied, as it awakened in her mind many past remembrances; and her faithful Janet was also again put in possession of the same room, in which she slept before; on retiring for the night, she reminded her mistress of a former promise, that when she came to Warburgh Castle, she should be permitted to pay a visit to her aged parents in the Orkneys; "be assured," Angela replied, "the promise is not forgotten by me, and shall be most certainly fulfilled; perhaps, Janet, you would prefer continuing there, I should be unwilling to part with you, but if your future happiness depend upon it, I would, on no account, refuse your request;" "for Heaven's sake, ma-

dam" Janet answered, "do not mention such a thing, never will I desert you so long as I have life; can you imagine after the gaiety of Paris, I could reconcile myself to that barren desolate spot; I am only anxious to see once more my good parents, and the companions of my youth; a stay of fourteen days will be amply sufficient for me; I would not again reside there, on any consideration, as independent of my regard for you, I should think myself buried before my time; had I never strayed beyond the rocky boundary of my native Isle, I should have been satisfied with it; but being by your goodness introduced into livelier scenes, my thoughts, and wishes aspire beyond the humble cot of the fisherman;" "my good girl" said Angela, "I was only jesting, I know full well, your attachment to me will end, but with your life; I applaud your filial affection, and will speak to the Count to provide you with a conveyance, which shall wait to bring you back;"

Janet overwhelmed her mistress with a profusion of thanks, and then took leave for the night.

Angela performed her promise very soon, a small vessel was easily procured for the voyage, and in a week Janet embarked, and sailed for the Orkneys, bearing such a munificent remembrance from her mistress, to sandy and Moggy, as would enable them to pass the evening of their lives in comfort, and comparative affluence; she also took a letter to Miss M'Donald, accompanied by a valuable ring, and a handsome piece of plate, to decorate the sideboard of the young Laird; when at Paris, Angela bore in mind the former request of Janet, and provided herself with these presents, as a small tribute of gratitude, to a family, to whom she was so deeply indebted for their friendship, and hospitality, when cast desolate, and forlorn upon their coast.

Ellen and Angela walked by the seaside, and beheld the vessel fast receding from their view; this forcibly reminded them of the danger the latter had escaped, under similar circumstances; and they in unison lifted their eyes to Heaven, with a silent ejaculation of thanks, for such a mercy more powerful, than words could express it; they daily amused themselves by retracing those paths in which they had formerly been accustomed to stray; in viewing the progress of those shrubs, and rich exotics, which had been the peculiar care of Angela, and since nurtured with the utmost attention by Ellen; they also beheld with no little pleasure, how much the garden had been improved, by the horticultural knowledge of St. Alme.

The Countess and her young friend paid an early visit to the pensioners, to support whom the bounty of Ellen had so largely contributed; the village school, established

by her direction, for the education of females, was not neglected by them; they superintended the progress their little pupils had made in their studies, and awarded prizes to the industrious; to behold their infant minds expand, and the seeds of virtue and religion ripening in their breasts, gave to both ineffable satisfaction.

The mother of Angela frequently accompanied them a short distance, and appeared to imbibe new strength from the change of air; the change of scene also contributed to revive her naturally languid spirits; supported by the arm of an affectionate daughter, she often traversed the spacious grounds, and beheld with delight the exuberant garden; rosy spring had just receded, and made way for the ripened beauties of summer; every thing was blooming in full luxuriance, the meridian sun animating and

invigorating all around; the eye gazed with wonder on the various colours, that the shrubs and flowers displayed to the view, and the alfactory sense was gratified with the rich perfumes that exaled from them, and breathed their fragrance in every direction; nature was now showering down her bounty, with an unsparing hand; the Baroness was enraptured with the scene; it was such a contrast to the noise and bustle of the populous city she had left, that it became doubly acceptable; the Count was much taken up with some alterations he was making, that the ladies saw very little of him until the Castle bell summoned him to dinner; and the evenings were generally enlivened by the musical powers of Ellen, and Angela.

As Janet had been gone the time proposed, Angela was now daily expecting her return; she frequently ascended a hill, which

commanded an extensive sea view, and every vessel which she saw at a distance, she anxiously hoped was the bearer of her faithful domestic.

One evening, Ellen, Angela, and the Count were strolling on the sea beach when they observed a small sloop standing in for the shore, the wind being favorable, in a little time she was at anchor; the Count, by a pocket telescope, soon discovered that it was the same, in which Janet embarked, the boat was lowered down, but to the infinite disappointment of Angela, no female was seen to enter it; she looked with an anxious eye, until it put off from the vessel, and approached the spot where they were; good Heavens, she then exclaimed, where, where is Janet? some dreadful accident must have befallen her; the Count and Ellen attempted to offer her consolation in vain, her eye

was stedfastly fixed on the progress of the boat, no sooner had it reached the shore, than she ran towards it in breathless agitation, and demanded what they had done with their passenger? before the person she addressed had time to answer her, she eagerly snatched a letter he held in his hand, tore it hastily open, and found it was from the young Laird, acquainting her, that he could not be satisfied with expressing his gratitude by writing alone, but was desirous to do it in person, and that in a few days both his sister, and himself would have that happiness; they had therefore prevailed upon Janet to defer her return, that they might accompany her.

Fearing her mistress should be uneasy at the delay, he had dispatched the vessel with this letter; thank God she is safe, said Angela, I have so long been accustomed to misfortune, that my orfeboding heart is ever

ready to conjecture the worst; with a mind again at ease, she took the arm of the Count, and returned with Ellen and him to the Castle.

CHAP. XXVIII.



JANET had a fair wind, and soon got sight of her native island; when she landed, dressed in the last parisian fashion, amidst a concourse of fishermen who were on the shore, all hats were token off on her approach by the men, and the women dropped their best courtesy, little thinking this fine lady was the daughter of their humble neighbours Sandy and Moggy, so completely was she metamorphosed from the raw scotch girl they formerly knew her; she nodded familiarly to all, but none appeared to recognize

her; breathless with impatience, she at length reached the cottage of her aged parents; Sandy was sitting outside the door in his arm chair, enjoying the evening air, with his faithful Moggy by his side; they rose from their seat at her approach, and began to make their obeisance, as to a perfect stranger; the tide of filial affection could no longer be restrained, Janet only answered their salutations, by throwing her arms round the neck of her venerable father, exclaiming, "do you not know me? do you not know your child?" at the welcome sound of her voice, they both embraced their long lost daughter, and all blended their tears together; the old couple than wiped their eyes, and gazed with wonder, and astonishment, at the alteration so short a time had made in their beloved girl.

Many of Janet's companions were witness to this scene, but stood at humble dis-

tance, until she beckoned them to approach; her hand was extended to each, accompanied with a smile; the news soon spread to the neighbouring cottages all the inmates of which, both young and old, hastened to welcome her return; to many of them she gave some little present, as a remembrance; joy sparkled in every countenance, and the evening was spent in innocent mirth, and conviviality; overcome with fatigue, Janet at length retired to rest, and slept as soundly on her humble pallet, as on the beds of down at Warburgh Castle.

The next morning she astonished her parents with the bounty of Angela, a bounty, great beyond their expectation; they received the gift with gratitude, and blessed the day that the life of their benefactrix was preserved on the Orkney Islands.

After having partaken of the best breakfast the cot afforded, Janet proceeded on her way to the house of the young Laird, accompanied by one of the fishermen, who carried the munificent present of Angela; M'Donald met her in the avenue, without the smallest recollection of her, and on requesting to speak to both his sister, and himself, she was conducted into the best parlour; Miss M'Donald soon joined them, on which she communicated her name, and produced a letter from her mistress, also the piece of plate and ring; the former was a beautiful vase with a suitable inscription, which when placed on the sideboard of the young Laird reared its proud head, in lofty state, above the pieces of antique plate that surrounded it; the ring was a valuable diamond inscribed with the name of Angela.

They were both much gratified by this kind, and superb remembrance from their

young friend, and out of respect to her, Janet was admitted as a guest at their table; indeed they offered to accomodate her with a bed while she remained on the island; but this she modestly declined; as it was probable she might never again behold her aged parents, she wished to devote the residue of her time to them; she now informed the young Laird, and his sister of all that had befallen Angela since she left them; of the splendid fortune she enjoyed by the death of her father, and Baron Steinbergh; also that she was soon to give her hand to the Baron St. Alme; that the ceremony was to take place at Warburgh Castle, after which the Count and Countess were to accompany them to the family mansion of Fitzormond.

At the mention of the marriage, some embers of former affection appeared to revive in the breast of M'Donald, but they were soon checked by his good sense, which

constrained his feelings, within the more rational bounds of friendship; they insisted Janet should take a bed there that night, and listened with anxious attention to the relation of what had happened to Angela during the last few months; they expressed a great wish to see their amiable young friend once more, and if this opportunity were lost, she would be too far removed from them to effect it, they therefore agreed to accompany Janet back to Warburgh Castle, as they could not feel satisfied to testify their gratitude, in any other manner than personally, and from the hospitality and assurances of the Count and Countess, they were confident of not being considered as unwelcome guest.

Janet found the same forms were observed as in the time of the old Laird, the domestics were summoned, according to ancient custom, to morning and

evening prayer; the first and last act of the day was an offering of praise, and adoration to the bountiful giver of all good, for his continued protection of them; the family pictures kept their places with an excellent likeness of the old Laird added to them; also the well worn livery, with tarnished lace, was still exhibited on the back of their attendant, and from the care taken of it, appeared to be destined to go through as many generations as it had done.

After breakfast Janet took her leave, not a little elevated, as she thought, in the eyes of her companions, on being admitted a guest at the table of the Laird; when she had once more regained the cottage of Sandy, she took care the distinguished honor she had received, should not be concealed, by relating it to every one she saw; the old couple viewed her with conscious pride, when they contemplated the change which

had taken place in her, who was the only comfort of their declining years; when they beheld the humble Janet, transformed into the principal attendant on the heiress of the noble House of Fitzormond; the better to impress the minds of her companions with her consequence, and importance, she occasionally imitated some of the airs and graces of the Paris ladies she had seen, by looking down with a degree of superciliousness, and contempt on her less fortunate neighbours; but this was only the flight of a moment, her natural good humour soon returned, and she again became the same Janet, they had formerly known.

A fortnight had nearly expired, when she began to think it was time to return to her mistress, as she had promised, she therefore waited upon M'Donald to know, when his sister, and himself would be able to accompany her; he replied

'it must be another week before he could go;' but to alleviate the anxiety of Angela at the delay, he proposed the vessel should sail immediately with a letter from him, to inform her of the cause, and that in a few days Janet should embark with them in a sloop he had fitted up, for occasionally crossing to Scotland; Sandy and Moggy rejoiced the departure of their only child was postponed, for a short time; the week that remained was devoted by Janet, to the solace, and comfort of her venerable parents.

The young Laird at length announced to his intended "compagnon de voyage" that the next day, but one, was fixed for their departure, accompanied with a desire she would be at his house by seven o'Clock in the morning: to divert her anxious parents from turning their thoughts to the separation, which was about to take place, also to shew a testimony of her regard for

the juvenile friends of her youth, Janet determined to invite all those with whom she had been most intimate, to spend the last evening of her stay, at Sandy's cot; the summons was eagerly embraced, the lasses assembled early in their best attire, and when the boats employed in the fishery came on shore, the young men were also requested by the mistress of the ceremonies, to join the festive throng; after having been regaled with tea, cakes, and whiskey, "auld Jamie" the blind piper was sent for, that he might exert his musical powers to enable them to strike up a rustic dance; Janet opened the ball, having been selected for a partner by the smartest of the fishermen; the evening was beautiful, and they danced upon the green, while Sandy and Moggy sat in their arm chairs at the door of their cot, gazing with pleasure on the mirth, and merriment visible in every countenance; they kept up the dance until a late hour, and would have

continued yet longer, but unfortunately "auld Jamie" had taken copious draughts of whiskey, the potency of which had such an effect upon him, that the bag-pipes dropped from his nerveless arm, and he fell back in his chair, in a state of utter insensibility; as this loss could not be supplied, it of course put an end to the evening's amusement, and the guests departed, not a little pleased with the liberality of the donor.

After breakfast the next morning, which was very sparingly partaken of by any of them, Janet, supporting a venerable parent on each arm, proceeded to the house of M'Donald, the hearts of all were too full to afford much conversation; the daughter endeavoured to disguise her own feelings, that she might assuage those of her mother; she promised, if God spared their lives, to visit them again in three years; reminded them of the comparative comfort they were now

placed in, by the bounty of Angela, and bad them not despair, but put their trust in the same omnipotent Being, who had hitherto protected them; soon as they reached the Laird's, he informed Janet every thing was ready, and they only stopped for her; Miss M'Donald joined them directly, when they all proceeded to the beach, where the boat of the vessel was waiting to carry them on board; the Laird, and his sister immediately got into it, while Sandy and Moggy with tears running down their furrowed cheeks, were alternately embracing their daughter and invoking blessings on her head; the heart of Janet now over-flowed, she could no longer restrain the effusions of nature, the torrent would burst forth, and she blended her tears with theirs.

At length after kissing each parent affectionately, and extending a hand to those of her female companions who came to see

her embark, she hurried into the boat, it instantly put off from the shore, and rowed towards the vessel, which was already under way; Janet cast many a long lingering look behind and with her handkerchief waved a last adieu, which was answered by Sandy, with his hat; when she was on board, the sloop made sail, with a favorable wind, and the shores of Orkney were soon lost to the view.

Toward evening the breeze died away, and a calm succeeded for so long a time, that it was the morning of the sixth day, before they could discern the lofty turrets of Warburgh Castle; by noon they came to an anchor in the bay; when the boat was hoisted out, M'Donald, his sister, and Janet entered it, and proceeded towards the shore; they had got but a small distance from the vessel, and they could plainly distinguish Angela looking anxiously towards them,

leaning upon the arm of a gentleman; when nearer, Janet exclaimed "it is the Baron St. Alme, the wedding of my dear mistress will now soon take place;" although the Laird well knew he never had any prospect of obtaining the hand of Angela, yet he could not help feeling an unpleasant sensation, at the sight of his more happy rival; the colour rushed into his cheeks, and was succeeded by a death-like paleness; the sensation, however, was but momentry, as he had recovered his composure before the boat reached the shore.

Janet was so overjoyed at again seeing her mistress, that urged by impatience, she jumped out nearly up to her knees in water; Angela welcomed her back most ardently, and held out her hand in token of regard for her faithful domestic, this was eagerly taken by Janet, and pressed respectfully to her lips; St. Alme stepped forward to assist Miss

M'Donald, and her brother soon followed; Angela embraced the former most ardently, and the latter she shook by the hand, much pleased that she had another opportunity of testifying her gratitude to those, who had so liberally, and kindly protected her, when in distress; she presented them both to St. Alme, at the same time stating the boundless obligations she was under to their family; he received them very cordially, saying the friends of Mademoiselle Fitzormond must ever be dear to him.

The Baron walked forward with M'Donald, Angela took the arm of his sister, and Janet brought up the rear; in this manner they proceeded to the Castle; long before they reached the drawbridge, they were met by the Count and Countess who welcomed their new guests with the utmost kindness and hospitality; after which they proceeded to the library, where the two venerable Ba-

roncsses were sitting, to whom they were seperately introduced, and most graciously received; the mother of Angela added her acknowledgements, to those of her daughter, for the obligations they considered themselves under to the whole of the M'Donalds; the Laird's reserve soon wore off, having spent some days with the Count and Countess before; their increased condescension, and affability, made him regard them as old acquaintance; his sister, who had never been in such company until then, could not at once conquer her natural timidity, and to Angela alone was she unreserved; but the winning kindness of Ellen, soon dissipated it, and in a few days, she felt herself much more at ease; she had been to Edinburgh but seldom, since she left school, consequently had of late seen very little more society than that of her own family.

By the persuasions of the Countess, and

the entreaties of Angela, their scotch friends agreed to remain at Warburgh until the marriage ceremony was over, which would be in another week, and great preparations were making for it; the only difference that existed between the Count and Ellen, was, that they were not of the same religion; the former was a Lutheran, and the latter was brought up a Catholic; but a chapel had been built contiguous to the Castle, that Ellen might have the power of worshipping her Creator, in the manner she had been accustomed; St. Alme and Angela, being both natives of France, were Catholics also, therefore in this chapel was the ceremony to be performed, which was newly painted and ornamented for the occasion.

In the valet of St. Alme, Janet recognized an old acquaintance; she had often met the lively Louis at Paris, and he had as often whispered soft tales of love into her ear; he

had been in England with a former master, and spoke the language fluently; he now renewed those tales to the blushing maid, who, nothing loath, suffered him to gain an interest in her heart; many were the interviews they had in the garden, seated in one of the alcoves, after dinner when all the family were engaged at table; regardless of the hours passing, they one day had extended their stay longer than usual, and at the moment Louis was on his knees to the fair damsel, urging her with all the eloquence of which he was master, to give her sweet person to him for life; and she, with ill dissembled coyness, and down cast eyes, was saying "dont ask me Mr. Louis, indeed I cannot think of it" although her looks at the same time spoke consent to his wish, the enraptured pair were suddenly surprised by the entrance of Ellen, and Angela, who had, for sometime been listening to the amorous effusions of these turtle doves; Louis im-

mediately arose, dropped the hand of Janet, which he held unresistingly, and in confusion made the best of his way to the Castle.

The love stricken maid stood almost petrified with alarm, the blushes that were glowing on her cheek, as she heard the fond and welcome avowal of his passion for her, soon fled, a ghastly pallid hue succeeded, she trembled much, and with difficulty kept herself from falling, until reanimated with the fascinating smile of her mistress; be not alarmed or frightened Janet, she said, you are not the first girl that has been surprised with a handsome young man at her feet; and so you intended to refuse him, I did not think there was so much cruelty in your nature; indeed madam, exclaimed Janet, I did not mean to be cruel; I sincerely believe you, Angela replied, but you are at present so confused, you know not what you say, you may now go, in the evening I will have

some father conversation with you about this love affair, Janet; glad to be released, hurried away, and was soon out of sight, hid from the view by the various shrubs, with which she was surrounded.



CHAP. XXIX.



ANGELA felt a sincere regard for her faithful domestic, consequently was unwilling she should throw herself away upon a man, who might render herself miserable; she therefore determined to inquire of St. Alme, the character of Louis, before she gave any farther encouragement to the business; the inquiry was answered most satisfactorily, as although he had been but a short time with his present master, he had known him from his earliest years, and it was the knowledge of his many good qualifications, that induced

St. Alme to take him into his service, on being out of place, in consequence of the death of the last person with whom he lived.

After such a favorable account, Angela could not object to it, therefore when she retired for the night, she told Janet, that if her heart was Louis' she had no objection to her giving him her hand also; after numberless blushes, courtesies, and hesitations, the nymph confessed, she liked him very well; but she had an objection to the match, which to her was insurmountable, the idea of leaving so excellent a mistress; that, Angela replied, there shall be no occasion for immediately, you may both keep your places, and when the prospect of a young family renders it necessary, that you should no longer continue in them, I will fix you in some cottage near me, and allot you such a portion of land, as will maintain you with industry.

Janet was so overjoyed at this generosity of her mistress, that for a few moments it deprived her of the power of answering; but her natural garrulity could not be long restrained, the tide of gratitude burst forth, not only from her tongue, but her eyes, as was testified by the pearly drops, which chased each other down her ruddy cheeks; Angela now told her, there was however one condition she must submit to, which was that she did not marry Louis in less than twelvemonths, as this would enable her to prove, with more certainty, whether his affection was sincere; Janet, after a little stammering and hesitation, consented, and on leaving the room, longed anxiously for the moment she could again see the love-sick swain, and gladden his heart with these happy tidings.

At length the eventful morn arrived, which was to give Angela to St. Alme; it

was ushered in by the general signal of rejoicing, the firing of the Castle guns, the sound of which reverberated in responsive echos from the surrounding hills; the peasantry, who had so often received the bounty of Ellen, from the hand of her beloved young friend, were all dressed in their holiday clothes, on the occasion.

Angela, being deeply impressed with the solemnity of the ceremony she was about to undergo, did not that morning join the family breakfast table, but remained in her room accompanied only by her sole surviving parent, that she might collect her scattered thoughts, and better prepare herself for the serious change that was now to take place in her future life: although well convinced of the many, and exemplary virtues possessed by the man, to whom she was going to intrust her future happiness; although she had received the strongest proofs of his

unchanged affection, and that his attachment was not the impulse of the moment, but the result of long, cool, and deliberate reflection, yet she felt her mind struck with an awe, and reverence at the solemn vow she was to make, and which she requested Heaven, to grant her power, and inclination to fulfil; the Baroness also invoked the supreme disposer of all events, to shower blessings on the head of her beloved daughter, and while she was clasped in her maternal embrace, they were interrupted by the presence of Ellen, who came to announce every thing was ready to proceed to the chapel; Angela took the hand of her kind friend lifted it to her lips in silence, and then descended the great staircase, at the bottom of which she was affectionately received by St. Alme, and the Count; the Baroness Fitzormond took the arm of the latter, the former supported his aged mother, and Angela walked with the Countess Wasburgh, followed by the

M'Donalds; on entering the chapel, she advanced to the altar with a firm step, and dignified composure; the happy St. Alme was soon by her side, the minister began the sacred rites, and Angela made the responses with unaffected piety, and devotion; soon as the priest had given his benediction, and the ceremony finished, she received the heartfelt congratulations of all present, and returned leaning upon the arm of him to whom she had just intrusted her future destiny; the moment the bride appeared in sight, the Castle guns announced the happy news to all the peasantry, who, by loud cheers, testified their joy at the event; the tables had been set forth in the Castle yard, under the direction of old Peter, to regale the joyful populace, and the Goddess of Plenty seemed to have emptied all her stores, so bountifully were they supplied; the peasants sat down in the presence of their benefactors, with countenances in which the most lively

gratitude was strongly painted, and after the repast, took copious libations, to the health and happiness of the bride, and bridegroom; as the glass circulated, the aged forgot their cares, and felt renovated, as in their youthful days; one general face of joy overspread the whole; cheerfulness, content, and pleasure shed their benign influence all around.

The neighbouring nobility were invited by the Count and Countess, to a sumptuous dinner, to celebrate the event; on which occasion, an increased display of grandeur and magnificence, was evinced, by the hospitable donors of the feast, in honour of their illustrious friends.

Thus passed a day the most important in the life of Angela, and St. Alme, a day the anniversary of which, ever found them enjoying undiminished felicity, and after

years had glided away, they looked back to it, with equal pleasure and delight.

The M'Donalds having remained two days more at the Castle, on the third morning prepared to embark again for the Orkneys; Ellen, Angela, the Count and St. Alme accompanied them to the boat, followed by Janet, who sent a number of remembrances to the aged Sandy and Moggy; the parting with the Laird and his sister produced reciprocal regret, Angela knew the many good qualities they possessed, and regarded them not only with gratitude, but the sincerest friendship; they were also equally impressed with the splendid virtues of their amiable friend; Warburgh shook the hand of both, most cordially, and gave them a pressing invitation to the Castle, at all times, but especially when the Baron and Baroness St. Almè were there, of which he would always give them the earliest information; the boat

soon reached the vessel, when with a strong and favourable wind, it quitted the road so rapidly, that every person on board soon became undistinguishable.

The next morning was appointed for Angela to leave the Castle, therefore the residue of that day was in part occupied, by giving some substantial proofs of her bounty, amongst those of the female peasantry who were most deserving, and whom, as the almoner of Ellen, she had so frequently visited.

It was arranged that the Countess Warburgh should accompany Angela to France, and stay with her the rest of the summer, and the Count should join them in about six weeks; the two venerable mothers were to continue with their children for the present, and both hereafter to reside together in retirement, at the house of the Baroness Fitzormond.

The whole party quitted the Castle, early on the ensuing day, in four travelling carriages, and proceeded by easy stages, until they reached the family mansion of Angela in Normandy; it stood on an eminence, and the architect had done full justice to the wishes of its mistress, by forming a most magnificent building, such as would testify to future ages, the riches and opulence of the house of Fitzormond; although pride, and ostentation were far removed from her peaceful breast, yet she voluntarily made this offering to the manes of a deceased father, whose ardent desire, when living, had been to have it rise again from its ruinous and delapidated state, to its Ancient splendor.

In the avenue to it, the carriages were preceded by the tenantry, and peasants, with a band of rustic music, and loud cries resounded from all sides of long live the Baron and Baroness St. Alme; who happy in the

affection of each other, and beloved by all, enjoyed as much perfect felicity in this world, as was possible to fall to the lot of any human being.

FINIS.

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